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The Shape of Things

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WHEN A CONSERVATIVE CONGRESSMAN CALLS Hearst "the fiend of San Simeon," that is news. When the House rises to its feet in noisy agreement, that is good news. Even more damning to Hearst was the laughter that greeted the charge of communism made in a Hearst telegram against Representative McSwain, who is a South Carolina conservative of unimpeachable devotion to the militarist interests. As a result Senator Black and his lobby committee received without a dissenting vote their $10,000 with which to pay court expenses in the legal battles that confront them, and the Hearst influence has been weakened by that most effective of weapons—ridicule. In view of the persistent fear that the Black committee is going beyond its constitutional rights, Senator Black's proof that his committee is doing no more than the Walsh-Wheeler committee did in the Teapot Dome investigation has great cogency. It is true of all instruments, and of governmental instruments as well, that they can be turned in both directions. For that reason the essential question to ask is what the temper of the investigating committee is, and what objectives it is aiming at. The answer as regards the Black committee is favorable on both counts. The most comic-sinister episode the committee has turned up thus far is the curious Brook Farm experiment in which six Democratic Congressmen went in for cooperative living with a lobbyist, and helped him gather around his dinner table forty or fifty of their colleagues. If the cooperative commonwealth is ever to come in this country, we can trust the lobbyists to achieve it—if there is enough in it for them.

*

THE EASTERN FLOODS, WHICH HELD UP TRAIN movements over a wide area, have compelled us to print part of this week's issue of *The Nation* on other than our regular paper stock. This is, of course, only a trifling item in the confusion and damage which the floods wrought. The press has described the picture of houses and bridges destroyed and whole areas devastated, and the terror, disease, and death the rivers in their relentless course have dealt out. The great tragedy is that this should come as a sequel to the disaster of the depression and that in each area it should bear most heavily on the very income groups which had already been hit hardest. As in the confusion wrought by all disasters, panic and heroism were equally evident. In the front ranks of the heroes emerged the radio

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amateurs, or "hams," as they call themselves, who stuck stubbornly to their home-made sets and flashed out warnings and messages while the waters rose around them, although in one case a mistaken report led to unnecessary panic. An attempt to make political capital out of the flood occurred when Speaker Ives of the New York Assembly charged Governor Lehman with playing politics because he issued a relief call before the Assembly did—a charge nullified by its own absurdity. One fact of social value has emerged. Although the present floods were largely unavoidable, a program of reforestation and cultivation of soil-building crops to make the land better able to resist the ravages of wind and rain would undoubtedly aid in the prevention of future disasters.

*

FORTUNATELY THERE CAN STILL BE A difference of opinion between the departments of commerce and of justice. The striking sailors on the steamship California whom Secretary Roper wanted tried for mutiny were not met by agents of the Department of Justice when they arrived in New York on March 18. They were subjected, however, to a punishment which for all practical purposes may be almost as serious. Sixty of them were logged from two to six days' wages and discharged, some with marks on their cards which will serve to blacklist them. The incident has precipitated trouble along the New York waterfront. The California canceled its trip back to the West Coast because it could not muster a crew; two other ships were affected by sympathetic strikes; and the rank and file is talking of a general strike unless the California's crew is taken back. As for the old-line leaders in the Seamen's Union, the California brought them also a cargo of trouble. With their customary militance against strikes, they have denounced the growing revolt as "unauthorized" and threatened expulsions, while the rank and file is agitating for a maritime federation to match those of the West Coast and Gulf ports.

*

AKRON'S 14,000 RUBBER WORKERS HAVE GONE back to their jobs after a strike of five weeks. The immediate issues were cuts in pay and personnel through the introduction of longer hours and the speed-up. Fundamentally the rubber workers are contending with a relentless pressure toward reduced costs in an industry cursed with over-expansion. Against that pressure they were able to enlist a remarkable counter-pressure of labor solidarity, particularly from those elements represented by the Committee for Industrial Organization. It was this counter-pressure that kept the strike at once solid and peaceful in spite of threats of violence from the "law-and-order" league, and finally won a favorable settlement, including union recognition. Two ominous provisions, however, found their way into the settlement. There is to be a temporary twenty-four-hour week in order to avoid lay-offs; and lists of contemplated lay-offs are to be given the union in advance. Will the reduction of the working force be any sweeter if carried out under union auspices? Footnote: The profits of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company for 1935 exceeded those of 1934 by almost a million dollars, and the annual salary of P. W. Litchfield, who precipitated the strike, is $81,000.

*

THE 1936 INCOME-TAX COLLECTIONS, WITH their 35 per cent rise, are being hailed by supporters as proof that prosperity has at last returned. In some quarters it is even being suggested that the Administration's tax on corporation surpluses should be modified or dropped in view of the prospect of a continued increase in revenues. But a more careful analysis casts doubt on these optimistic conclusions. The greater amount of this supposed prosperity is accounted for by the spectacular rise in corporation earnings. The National City Bank compilation of the earnings of 895 large industrial corporations shows a 47 per cent increase in profits for 1935 over 1934. Despite the fact that stock ownership is fairly widespread in this country, the bulk of holdings are concentrated in the hands of a relatively few individuals at the top of the income brackets. In contrast to the increased wealth of this group, there has been very slight improvement in the economic status of the wage-earning class as a whole. Wages in January, 1936, averaged nearly 7 per cent higher than in January, 1935, but this rise has been largely offset by a 4 per cent rise in the cost of living. Despite an increase of 10 per cent in business activity, the A. F. of L. figures for unemployment were within 400,000 of the 13,000,000 mark set a year ago.

*

A RELATIVE DECLINE IN THE PORTION OF THE national income accruing to the working class is normal during a period of expanding business activity. Business only flourishes under capitalism when profits are expanding more rapidly than costs. Nevertheless, the contrast between a 30 or 40 per cent gain for capital and a 3 per cent gain for labor should be disquieting even for the most reactionary economists. If it is true, as is indicated by the studies of the Brookings Institution, that the primary cause of our economic difficulties is to be found in the concentration of income in the hands of those who do not or cannot spend their income, it is evident that the present boom rests on most insecure foundations. The new tax program will aid somewhat in reducing the idle funds in the hands of individuals and corporations, but it is obviously inadequate to meet the growing instability of our economic structure.

*

BETHLEHEM STEEL AND FOURTEEN OTHER manufacturers of tin plate, including two subsidiaries of United States Steel, have been cited by the Federal Trade Commission for violation of the anti-trust laws. The commission charges that the steel companies have refused to sell their second-grade tin plate to small manufacturers of cans, and that this has created a monopoly for the huge American Can and Continental Can companies. There are three grades of tin plate. The best grade is bought by the large companies and is produced according

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to their specifications. The "seconds" and "over-runs," which accumulate in great quantity, constitute the second grade; it is bought by the small manufacturers who are financially unable to contract for the first-grade plate. The third grade is the hopelessly deficient product, and is called "waste-waste." The commission charges that in October, 1934, the steel companies entered into an agreement not to quote prices on or offer for sale the second-grade plate. It charges further that the prices quoted to the small companies on the first-grade plate are higher than those quoted to the two large companies; that there has been a vast accumulation of the second-grade plate; that some of the latter has been mutilated and sold domestically as "waste-waste," while the remainder has been exported in unmutilated shape; and that these acts "tend to increase the prices of tin plate above the prices which prevailed in the past."

*

"WHICH SHALL IT BE—THREE AND A HALF billion for the Youth Act or for crime?" With these words of William Fields, representing a group of transient boys and girls, hearings on the Amlie-Benson American Youth Act ended on March 20 before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. A previous witness had said that the nation pays $3,500,000,000 a year for "youth's part in crime"—the sum which, it is estimated, the bill would compel the government to spend every year in aiding needy students and in providing work for the unemployed between sixteen and twenty-five. That is seventy times the sum allocated this year to the National Youth Administration, and much more than seventy times what is likely to be allocated next year. Mr. Hopkins merely "hopes" that the NYA work will be continued. Unfortunately, despite the impressive testimony offered to the committee, the bill has no chance of enactment. All that is likely to happen is that the committee will take the advice of Mr. Studebaker, the Commissioner of Education, and call for a "further study" of youth's problems. But study is not enough. Meanwhile ever more transients are riding our freight cars and new criminals are being made every day. Most important of all, an unemployed mass of young people form fertile soil for social despair and for all the reckless political movements that may lead to fascism. The Roosevelt Administration is making one of its most disastrous errors by failing to grapple with the problem of the desperate American youth.

*

ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS, THE GREAT GREEK leader, whose tempestuous career came to an end last week, was one of the outstanding statesmen of modern Europe. His policies were frankly nationalist. A realist both in aims and strategy, he did not appeal to history or pseudo-science or spurious idealisms for a justification of nationalism; he preferred to measure the worth of a state by the kind of life it made possible for its citizens. Himself dictatorial by temperament, he repeatedly rebelled against dictation from above. Yet he invariably submitted to the decisions of the electorate, for his intellectual convictions had made him a constitutionalist, a liberal, and a democrat. His realism was reflected in his foreign policy. In the World War he was pro-Ally because he knew that if Greece remained neutral it was bound to lose, whatever the outcome. After the disastrous blunder of the post-war expedition to Smyrna he had the courage to recognize the error of this imperialist adventure and to carry through a new policy of conciliation with Turkey which developed into the Balkan Pact, one of the few factors of stability and peace in a distracted Europe. For more than a quarter of a century he dominated Greek politics. His death leaves the face of Greece drastically changed. While the essential economic problems which underlie the Greek turmoil will not be measurably affected by his passing, the domestic wrangling of parties should be somewhat diminished.

*

IT DOES NOT ALWAYS PAY AN EX-CONVICT TO go straight. Walter Baer was convicted of burglary in 1917, of forgery in 1919 and in 1921. While he was serving his third sentence he decided to reform; he studied engineering in prison and entered the profession on his release. He married an American-born wife and is now the father of three American-born children. A large group of persons in Portland, Oregon, from the mayor down, have testified that he is a law-abiding and valuable resident of the state. Baer claims he was born in California; the United States government, which about a year ago arrested him and held him for deportation, says he was born in Germany. The deportation charge against him is that he is an alien, guilty of a crime involving moral turpitude; the fact that he was active in the preparation of a program of public works for relief embarrassing to the local authorities was undoubtedly a contributing factor. Baer has been at Ellis Island since last November; Federal Judge Robert P. Patterson on March 18 dismissed a writ of habeas corpus sought in Baer's behalf and declared he was powerless to prevent the deportation. If Judge Patterson is correct, then in this case, as in so many others in which it deals with aliens, the law functions in a brutal fashion.

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WHILE THE WATERS OF THE ALLEGHENY AND Monongahela rivers were still swirling through Pittsburgh's business districts, it was reported that certain gentlemen whose offices were inundated put on top hats, morning coats, and rubber boots, and sloshed about in the flood. This is about the spirit in which the youthful Veterans of Future Wars have planned their organization and are rapidly gaining recruits in college after college. The flood is coming, they are saying, and we may very well drown in it; but if we can poke a little fun at our elders and betters before it happens, so much the better. Their humor is grim enough and they are doubtless very well aware of it. The young ladies who are joining them as the Gold Star Mothers of the Future, and who are asking for a trip to France to view in advance the graves of their as yet unborn sons, mean no disrespect to the mothers whose sons now actually lie there. But they do mean all

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possible disrespect and dishonor to the forces which brought about the last war and seem well on the way to bringing about the next. The "veterans" themselves, who now have posts in some thirty colleges, are demanding an immediate bonus of $1,000 to spend while they are still young and reasonably happy. Congressman Maury Maverick has promised to introduce and sponsor a bill to this effect, and Professor John B. Whitton of Princeton comments, "Judging from past experience it is likely to succeed." Real success in the movement, of course, would not consist in $1,000 apiece for every able-bodied man under thirty-six, but in routing war with ridicule. If the Future Veterans could do that, they would laugh not only now but hereafter.

Stepchildren of Recovery

TWENTY-TWO million people, or roughly one-sixth of our population, are living on relief. The all-time peak was reached in March, 1935, when 5,492,921 persons and their dependents were being given aid. On March 18, 1936, according to President Roosevelt's relief message, the number was 5,300,000. Because of the increasing poverty of state and local governments the share of the federal government in relief expenditures has steadily increased, until in 1935 it was carrying 74 per cent of the load and the President admitted that the states were doing as much as they could. Yet in a message filled with solemn expressions of concern for the plight of the unemployed he asked for a relief appropriation 15 per cent lower than the comparable amount being expended in the current year; and in one casual sentence he commended the destitute to the tender mercies of big business for any supplementary support they may need.

> This request [for $1,500,000,000] together with those previously submitted [for the CCC and public works] will, if acted upon favorably by the Congress, give security during the next fiscal year to those most in need, *on condition, however, that private employers hire many of those now on relief rolls.* [Italics ours.]

For the rest the President appealed to big business to obviate the necessity for further relief appropriations by extending its operations to absorb the unemployed. And he recommended to them the device which has been conspicuous for its failure in the three years of his Administration, namely, "united action" on the part of industry to shorten hours, increase employment, and "maintain weekly, monthly, or yearly earnings of the individual." The federal government, he said, would be glad to cooperate.

There is no doubt that industry is in favor of united action, but not in the direction of higher wages and shorter hours. In the report on the extent to which the principles embodied in the NRA had been retained—a report which has never been made public—it was revealed that industry had continued to the extent of 85 per cent the trade practices established by the NRA, that is, the elements in it tending toward monopoly and price-fixing. The extent to which industry continued to observe the NRA minimums as to wages and hours is best indicated in the latest survey of the American Federation of Labor, which shows that the average work week was one and one-fourth hours longer in 1935 than in 1934, and that although increased earnings of industry made possible a substantial lifting of pay, the rise in real wages was negligible.

In his message the President stressed the fact that the trend of reemployment is upward. Yet according to the A. F. of L. figures, 12,626,000 persons are still unemployed. There could be no clearer proof that the recovery we are now experiencing is a dividend recovery. As such it will not serve to improve the lot of the millions who will continue to need relief; on the contrary it is already being used as propaganda for reducing direct relief to the unemployed and for curtailing the projects of the WPA and the PWA.

While the President defended the states from the charge that they had shirked their duty in the matter of relief, he also made it clear that the pressure toward shifting the burden back to state and local governments was having its effect in Administration circles. "It is not desired," he said, "to encourage any states to continue to shirk. The federal government cannot maintain relief for unemployables in any state." In view of this pressure, which will grow rather than diminish, a report of the FERA giving in detail the amounts contributed respectively by federal, state, and local governments in 1935 is pertinent. It throws a grim light on the relief dispensed by local agencies. In the Southern states the combined contributions of local and state funds ranged from 0.3 per cent in North Carolina to 6.8 in Mississippi. For Arkansas the figure was 3.2, for South Carolina 2.6. In the nation as a whole, state and local funds constituted only about 25 per cent of the total amount expended for relief.

The so-called budgets on which hundreds of thousands of persons are now living range as low as $1 every two weeks. In other words, in many localities relief is practically non-existent. Medical aid is being abandoned even in those places where it was once given; in this field the nation is piling up for posterity a liability in public health much more serious than the national debt which both the Liberty League and the "humanitarian" Administration of Mr. Roosevelt are so intent on reducing.

"This report," wrote a local relief administrator in Texas who contributed to a survey made by the American Association of Social Workers, "has been written with great restraint, but it is difficult to remain entirely objective in the face of the present conditions." Mr. Roosevelt, nevertheless, has asked for a relief budget considerably smaller than that of last year, and 700,000 persons are to be cut off the WPA by July 1. How long the shimmering tower of recovery can be maintained while an ever-deepening pool of poverty washes about its base remains to be seen. We can be certain only of one thing. In an election year recovery and not relief will be the theme song wherever politicians gather.

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Has Hitler Won Out?

ON FIRST inspection the memorandum dispatched to the German government by the four other Locarno powers appears surprisingly firm. It not only condemns the Reich for its breach of treaty obligations, as was of course inevitable, but proposes a reestablishment of a neutral Rhineland zone to be patrolled by Allied troops pending the negotiation of new security agreements. In addition, it specifically prohibits Germany from erecting fortifications or preparing landing fields in the neutral zone. And finally, in the event that Hitler rejects these proposals, Great Britain and Italy are definitely committed to come to the assistance of France against Nazi aggression, and have drawn up a plan for cooperation among their general staffs.

Since this represents essentially all that France has been asking for ever since the Versailles conference, the French government has every reason to be satisfied. True, a rearmed Nazi Germany is far more of a menace than the defenseless Germany of the 20's. But in addition to the assurance of British support, hitherto never very certain, France now has definite commitments from Italy and the Soviet Union, both of which were at one time inclined to support the revisionist claims of the Weimar republic. For although the Locarno memorandum suggests that the World Court be asked to test the legality of the Franco-Soviet pact, that agreement was so carefully drawn that no one expects it to be invalidated. Should it be upheld, and should Poland join the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente against Germany, the iron ring which has been the object of French diplomacy will be complete. As long as it holds, the possibility of German aggression in the West will be reduced practically to zero.

On closer analysis, however, it is not so clear whether French or German diplomacy has scored the major triumph. Hitler's recent speeches have made it very clear that the tactics outlined in "Mein Kampf" constitute the backbone of present-day Nazi policy. Germany's immediate ambitions lie toward the East, and to assure a free hand in such a campaign Hitler desires above all else a guaranty of stability in the West. In this respect the plan drafted by the Locarno powers appears to play directly into his hands. Nothing is said about the necessity of an Eastern security pact, presumably on the theory that Locarno is confined solely to Germany's western frontier. This pretext is scarcely convincing in view of the fact that the powers promise to take up the German proposal for Eastern non-aggression pacts at a subsequent conference and specifically include Hitler's "afterthought" with respect to Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. But the memorandum contains not a word regarding the Soviet Union, which Hitler deliberately omitted from the list of countries with which he was willing to conclude non-aggression agreements. Apart from the Franco-Soviet and the Soviet-Czecho-Slovakian treaties, no protection has been envisioned against the probable next step of Nazi aggression. And it remains an open question whether France and Czecho-Slovakia would actually come to the assistance of the Soviet Union unless they could be assured of the support of Britain and Italy. In the absence of an effective system of collective security, bilateral pacts are little more than statements of present policy.

It goes almost without saying that neglect of the Eastern problem must ultimately mean collapse of all efforts to restrain Hitler, and must open the West as well as the East to the threat of Nazi aggression. The ring which French diplomacy has welded around Germany can be no stronger than its weakest section. It is possible that the first blow might not even fall against Russia. As M. Litvinov declared before the League Council, Hitler's attacks on the Soviet Union may only serve as a smoke screen for aggression which is being prepared against other states.

The proposal for a world peace conference to discuss limitation of armament, the liberalizing of trade relations, and possible redistribution of raw materials also represents a victory for Hitler, but one which no one will begrudge him. The threat of German aggression will never be removed as long as the Reich has grounds for feeling itself the object of unjust discrimination. Obviously there can be no permanent solution of the problem except on a *quid pro quo* basis. But if the League powers utilize their strong bargaining position against Gemany, they can well afford to grant substantial economic concessions. Before making any concessions, the powers should, as a test of Hitler's sincerity, insist that Germany return to the League and participate in an Eastern security pact which includes the Soviet Union. If Hitler categorically refuses these conditions, we may be assured that he means war, and it would be folly to give way to him.

Back to the Jungle

THREE recent decisions by the New York state courts may be seen as the first skirmishes in what may easily prove to be a nation-wide constitutional struggle for social security. We commented two weeks ago on the decision of the New York Court of Appeals declaring the state minimum-wage law unconstitutional. Earlier Judge Dowling of the New York Supreme Court had declared the state unemployment-insurance law valid, but now comes Judge Russell of the same court and declares it invalid. On the other hand, Judge Leonard Crouch of the Court of Appeals has rendered a decision upholding the state Housing Authority Act. Two major issues emerge from this confused array of legal opinions. One is the constitutional question whether a twilight zone is being set up within which both the federal and the state governments will be powerless to act. The second is the broader social issue: Will America be stopped even in the tardy and fragmentary efforts it is making toward some sort of program of social legislation? Shall we be forced back to the jungle of an individualistic, dog-eat-dog economic system?

The constitutional arguments in the decisions are the old ones. They revolve around the doctrine of due process

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of law, which, as every constitutional scholar knows, is an elastic term signifying merely that the judge thinks a particular law is going too far in its invasion of property rights. Due process of law serves thus as a magnificently contrived screen to obscure the fact that the judge is passing on the wisdom, as well as the legality, of legislation. In the Railway Pension case Justice Roberts denied that Congress could legislate on railway retirement pensions because of due process: presumably that was left to the area of the state police power. The unfavorable New York decisions on the minimum wage and unemployment insurance apply the same reasoning to state legislation, and declare that such action does not fall within the state police power either. If there is any better example of an anarchic situation, we should like to know it.

The irony of this judicial reasoning is further brought out by a comparison of the minimum-wage and unemployment-insurance decisions with the housing-law decision. The Housing Authority is upheld because slum clearance "vitally affects the health, safety, and welfare of the public." It is thereby brought within the police power of the state. But if the kind of houses that people live in affects their health and welfare, how much more so do the wages they get and the insurance they get against the ravages of unemployment! It is difficult to understand the vagaries of a judiciary that can make the patent connection in one instance and ignore it in the others.

Difficult, that is, until we get behind the rhetoric of the decisions to their real social logic. Slum clearance, especially when carried on under the aegis of local realty interests, is no great threat to the industrialists. In fact it may be seen as a form of state subsidy to them, helping to furnish the housing that should have been furnished by more adequate wages. But the social-insurance scheme is still, rightly or wrongly, regarded with hostility by employers. The New York decisions are crucially timed. They are the first judicial utterances on the state laws that are being passed in pursuance of the federal social-insurance program, and are bound to influence its fate.

We are no militant defenders of the federal social-security legislation as it now stands. As Abraham Epstein points out in a review elsewhere in this issue, the legislation is tragically inadequate, hesitant, confused. But it does represent a start. America is one of the last of all civilized countries to take these steps. What Germany did a half-century ago, what England did a quarter-century ago, we are only now attempting. The ironic phase is that even such fragmentary steps as we are taking still seem to such jurists as Judge Russell too great a burden on business enterprise. The opposition of the courts and of the business men whose interests they express becomes clear when it is remembered that any program of social security is actually a program of workers' security. It is the workers alone, principally the industrial workers, who constitute the income groups that are hardest hit by unemployment, old age, inadequate housing. They are the groups upon whom in our economic system the heavy burden of insecurity rests. It is these groups, just beginning to emerge from the jungle of insecurity, that the judges want to send back.

Heroism in Austria

THE trial of twenty-eight Socialists and two Communists in Vienna offers every day new proofs of their heroism and of the vitality of the democratic idea. The charges against them are the usual charges of treason. Their real offense is that after the fascist coup of two years ago they succeeded in reorganizing the shattered remnants of the Socialist Party into an underground movement that has become a real force in Austrian life and has given new hope to the workers and to the middle-class democratic elements.

The trial itself has all the drama of the Reichstag-fire trial, in a setting not so much of heroic despair as of clear-eyed political realism on the part of the defendants. The excellent dispatches of G. E. R. Gedye to the New York *Times* present them as magnificently calm and self-contained. The leaders admit without hesitation having carried on the trade-union and party organization. But they insist that they are loyal Austrians, fighting to maintain democratic liberties; that their quarrel is not with the tradition of Austrian democracy but with the fascist regime and the even more ruthless Nazi movement; that they will gladly fight for Austria if the fight is against Nazi dominance and for the restoration of the liberties of the common man.

There is a tragic as well as a heroic note here. Faced by fascist terror the Socialist movements of Europe no longer look forward to a socialized state but backward with nostalgia toward the democratic liberties of the constitutional states that existed before the fascist glacial epoch. There can be no doubt that socialism is fighting for its life in Austria today. The trial is the climax of a general drive to suppress the Socialists and the organized labor movement. The working-class quarters are terrorized by police and spies; wholesale arrests have been made and the prisons are full of so-called political offenders; the government lives in fear of mass demonstrations. It is significant that the representatives of the French, Belgian, English, and Czech labor and Socialist movements have been denied admittance to the trial, and that their protests have gone unheeded. The arrests of the prisoners were made by the approved espionage and stool-pigeon methods of terrorist governments, and even the women were subjected to continual torture and harassment in an attempt to get confessions from them.

The irony of it all is that without the aid of the workers the Schuschnigg-Stahremberg regime does not stand a chance of resisting the advance of Hitler and the Austrian Nazis. They may have the support of Mussolini; their meager armies may be paid by Italian funds. But ultimately a German attack can be resisted only by the massed force of the workers. The full extent of the Socialist achievement is missed unless it is remembered that these efforts at piecing together again the fragments of trade-union organization are what has alone kept the Austrian workers who have witnessed the treachery of the government from succumbing completely to Nazi propaganda.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Washington, March 21

THOUGH the Copeland-Roper ship-subsidy bill has not yet reached the floor in the House or Senate—it promises to stir up the biggest battle of the session when it does—the boys already are fighting over appointments to the Maritime Authority it would create as its administering agency. J. Monroe Johnson—dubbed "Popeye the Sailorman" for a variety of reasons in addition to the fact that he resembles the comic-strip character—has hinted in public places that he is to be chairman of the authority. Joseph B. Weaver, director of the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection, also is on tap. Such appointments would be in keeping with the Administration's performance to date in the ship-subsidy situation. Roosevelt seems determined here as in other things to take one step forward and two back.

"Popeye the Sailor"

Weaver has been borrowed from the Newport News Shipbuilding Company to do his present job in the Commerce Department. When his first and second lieutenants there were suspended recently, he talked valiantly of resigning in protest and exposing conditions within the department if they were dismissed. But dismissed they were—for carrying their fight for safety-at-sea legislation to the public—and Weaver promptly shut up. Johnson, Weaver's immediate chief, is the South Carolina politician, highway commissioner, and legionnaire who last year succeeded Ewing Y. Mitchell as Assistant Secretary of Commerce. Mitchell was ousted by Roosevelt for protesting, in general, that the New Deal had passed over the Commerce Department and, in particular, that the public was being defrauded by the permission given Roosevelt's pals of the International Mercantile Marine to forget they had contracted to run the Leviathan in exchange for a bargain price on other ships sold them by the government at the time. Johnson made a good successor; he could scarcely be counted on to know whether he himself, let alone the public, was being defrauded.

Roper's excuse for naming Johnson was that he needed an assistant who was expert in matters of transportation. When Senators at the hearings of the Copeland-Roper bill expressed doubt that Johnson's expertness in such matters extended to marine transportation, Johnson replied that he could do almost anything with "a small boat." He also expressed the belief that he knew as much as any man in Washington about maritime affairs, and he proceeded to give his blanket indorsement to the bill, though it later turned out that its drafters had forgotten to include a clause canceling the present mail-contract system of subsidies. It also turned out that virtually none of the qualified experts in the Commerce Department had been consulted on the drafting of the bill, and when Senator Guffey summoned one of those experts, O. P. M. Brown, to the stand for questioning, Johnson bounced to his feet to make that point clear and to warn the committee that Brown did not speak for the department. His tone suggested that Brown was a nihilist and he was giving the committee fair warning to duck before the witness started throwing bombs.

Brown, a mild little man, turned out to be the chief of the Shipping Board Bureau's litigation and an attorney who, in defending the government in claim cases, had won some 96 per cent of his cases since 1921. Under questioning by Guffey, who had Thomas M. Woodward, former vice-president of the Shipping Board, at his elbow, Brown dismembered the Copeland-Roper bill and showed it up as the fraud it is. But bad as it is, it still is not bad enough for Roper, Copeland, and their pals, who without drawing a word of repudiation from the White House persist in calling it an Administration bill. Those parts of it that constitute improvements on the original Copeland bill were forced in by the Post Office Department; and the Commerce Department's expert witness, J. Craig Peacock, an income-tax lawyer who practiced with Roper before the Secretary made him director of the Shipping Board Bureau, ran out on those insertions when he appeared before the committee. But even with those insertions deleted, the bill is still unacceptable to the ship operators, for the only real gravy it offers them is in subsidies for the construction of new ships. They want no new ships. Among them, with the exception of the United Fruit and Grace lines, they have only $4,000,000 in free assets and can't finance new construction even on the excessively generous terms offered by the bill.

TWENTY-FOUR hours after beginning hearings Tuesday in its investigation of the $5,000,000,000 American Telephone and Telegraph structure, the Federal Communications Commission had to shift temporarily from its main line of inquiry. But the digression, caused by the absence of Walter S. Gifford, A. T. and T. presi-

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dent, was not without its value. Adroitly probing into the relations between the pious Gifford's outfit and the gambling syndicate that operates a network of illegal bookmaking joints in thirty-six states, Chief Investigator Samuel Becker showed how unscrupulous "the world's largest private enterprise" can be in small things. Becker brought out that the company's agents, with the knowledge and consent of their superiors, bribe police and prosecuting authorities, assist the touts and racketeers in concealment of their operations, and resort to all manner of flimflam to keep up a holy front. Having learned what the company will do for the sake of relatively insignificant profits, the public will be better prepared to resist the glib attempts of company apologists to explain away the larger and more intricate disclosures that are to follow.

Becker touched on some of those the opening day when he showed that in justifying to state regulatory commissions the equipment costs that pad out the rate bases for phone service, company officials urge comparison between the prices paid Western Electric, an A. T. and T. subsidiary, for the equipment and the prices charged by the Graybar Electric Company for identical equipment. On such occasions, company representatives, including Mr. Gifford, have sworn that Graybar was an independent company. Becker showed that even in the minutiae of its operations Graybar is under the complete control of Western Electric and buys from that company the equipment it sells to telephone companies outside the Bell system. Becker will show later that those companies have no more right to the title of "independent" than has Graybar. He will also blast the A. T. and T.'s claim to having its stock so widely distributed that the company is virtually publicly owned. He already has torn away its mask of paternalism by showing that such losses as it has suffered during the depression have been taken out of its employees' hides. Hoover's doctor of unemployment, Man-a-Block Gifford, was forced by Becker to admit that the drop in the company's operating revenues since 1929 has been matched almost exactly by the drop in its pay roll. Gifford, who gets $206,000 a year, also was forced to admit that this pay-roll cut was made chiefly at the expense of the lowest-paid workers and at no expense to the company's stockholders, who have continued to draw dividends at the rate of $9 per share.

Dr. Copeland

THE government has just filed its brief in a Supreme Court case (United States *vs.* Elgin, Joliet, and Eastern Railway) that may drastically reshape the nation's railroad structure. If the court rules in the government's favor, the United States Steel Corporation will have to get rid of some twenty-five railroads that it owns. The property immediately at issue is the Chicago Outer Belt Line, which so encircles Chicago that all the other roads entering the city must pay tribute to it. The government holds that possession of the road by United States Steel is a violation of the Hepburn act's famous commodities clause, and has been ever since that act became effective in 1908. It charges that ownership of the road by United States Steel enables it to discriminate in service among its competitors and allies, including the "independent" roads, and to pocket profits which, in effect, are the same as illegal freight-rate rebates. Federal Judge Woodward, who presided at the trial at Chicago, ruled against the government; he could detect no material link between the Belt Line and its principal customer—United States Steel's mines, mills, and quarries. Coordinator Eastman, of course, is the person who pressed the Department of Justice into filing suit against the railroad.

DO YOU remember when Roosevelt was going to drive the money changers out of the temples of finance? James J. O'Shea probably does. He is the vice-president of the National Bank of Detroit who currently is held in $40,000 bail for being "criminally involved" in the theft of $349,000 of city funds intrusted to the institution. O'Shea turns out to have had a court record as a confidence man before he was made an officer of the new bank, which is owned half by the government and half by General Motors. He pleaded guilty in 1923 to a state charge of larceny by conversion and was put on probation. A year later he pleaded guilty in federal court to a mail-fraud charge and was again put on probation. Then he became a banker. The first Detroit bank of which he was made an executive collapsed in 1931, the second in 1933. On the ruins of the second, the huge National Bank of Detroit was raised by the Roosevelt Administration through the RFC, and O'Shea was hired as a vice-president. At least two of its directors are under indictment for banking-law violations that occurred before the government approved their appointment as directors.

NOTE on a revolution: When "Porgy and Bess" played at the capital's leading theater this past week, Washington's Jim Crowism went into a temporary discard. Negroes were admitted on the same terms as whites and not only to gallery but also to balcony and orchestra seats. When "Green Pastures" played the same theater a few years ago, Negroes were barred except for one "special show," which they properly boycotted. The change this week went almost unnoticed. Whites who attended came away still able to hold up their proud heads, including the Midwesterners, who as soon as they get to Washington always become more "Southern" than the South.

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What About the Constitution?

BY CHARLES A. BEARD

WASHINGTON, one of the greatest whispering galleries in the world, is buzzing with talk about the Constitution and the Supreme Court. The talk goes on in the drawing-rooms, at receptions, in little dinner parties, and among members of Congress, off duty and on. Reporters, editors, and columnists engage in it and write sagely about the subject with few apparent misgivings. At first the buzzing seems to be a hopeless jumble of facts, opinions, declarations, assertions, and hair-splittings. But a patient analysis of the discussions reveals certain forms of patois and pattern. They may be summarized swiftly as follows:

1. Why bother about the old Constitution and the Supreme Court? They are mere manifestations of capitalism and will pass with the inevitable triumph of the proletariat.

2. The Supreme Court has usurped the power of passing on acts of Congress, and should be put in its proper place.

3. The Supreme Court is controlled by seven corporation lawyers hostile to the New Deal, and if it does not stop knocking out legislation the people will amend the Constitution.

4. The action of the Supreme Court is intolerable and some way must be found to get around its restrictions.

5. The Supreme Court is the last line of defense for the Constitution, liberty, and property, and not a breath of criticism is to be allowed. Otherwise the Constitution will be undermined and the country, deprived of its sustaining bulwark, will go to pot.

6. None of the recent cases is of the slightest social or economic importance, and discussing them is a waste of time. In the long run the Supreme Court has knocked out efforts of the states to enact effective social legislation, prevented Congress from acting, and facilitated the concentration of economic power in private hands. By taking this course it has helped to build up the greatest concentrated plutocracy in the world and thus prepared the way for the American people to choose between plutocracy and social democracy. Karl Marx himself could not have made a more satisfactory pattern of history and brought the deadly denouement nearer to its hour.

With variations in detail such are the philosophies revealed by conversations in Washington and columns in newspapers.

What could be said about them by a hard-boiled old historian, almost beyond the reach of earthly ambitions, whose mind is full of facts and opinions drawn from Breasted, Mommsen, Gibbon, Hegel, Marx, Spengler, Max Weber, Karl Mannheim, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, General Grant, John Marshall, Grover Cleveland, and several hundred other doers and sayers on the world stage since the fall of man through woman's sin? What can be said, indeed?

Such a hard-boiled old sinner would have to say, in the first place, that the business of the Constitution and the Supreme Court is not simple and that there is "something" in what each of the aforesaid proponents and contenders puts forward. Each has some facts to support his view, and is not entirely without reason. The sinner would likewise have to say that the immediate considerations, such as the NIRA or the AAA, are relatively unimportant, and that any action now taken must come under a long-run view of things.

But our hard-boiled sinner could actually be sure of very little. He might not expect much mercy himself from the seven former corporation lawyers, and yet be compelled to admit that he might get less mercy from the 531 representatives of the people in Congress assembled. That eminent body, now so zealously defended against the Supreme Court, has demonstrated in the District of Columbia just what it might do to education throughout the United States if it, and not the states, had control over the American schools. And according to pretty authentic rumor, it would pass now a whole sheaf of suppressive bills if it had not been warned by the President of the United States against embarrassing him in the coming election.

It is true that the Supreme Court has not been very hot in its defense of personal liberties and rights, but it has rendered a number of decisions blocking vigilante tyranny in various localities. Its civilization may be largely limited to legal lore, but it has some quality of mercy in its equipment. Probably the sharpest critic in Washington would rather risk his neck in the Palace of Justice than intrust it to a Nazi storm trooper. Has not an eminent lawyer in Germany said, "A handful of force is worth a bushel of justice"? Walk lightly. Things are not simple. The Congress of the United States could do a lot of damage to life,

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as distinguished from property, if it were turned loose without bridle or rider.

Some Congressional critics of the Supreme Court have recognized this peril and would make a distinction. They would deprive the court of power over economic legislation and would confine its annulling jurisdiction to matters of individual and personal liberty. This is really significant.

Then there are the amenders. Some of them think that the Constitution was made for horse-and-buggy days and should be brought up to date. But when they start to frame their sociological amendment, they encounter the very difficulty which confronted the framers of the Constitution. The fathers considered specification versus generality and decided on a combination. They conferred some powers expressly on Congress. Then they authorized it to make all laws "necessary and proper" for carrying into effect the powers conferred upon Congress and other branches of the government. They went farther than that. They empowered Congress to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and the general welfare of the United States.

It would be difficult to frame an amendment broader than the general-welfare clause. But see how that clause has been neglected, mauled, manhandled, and whittled away! An amendment broad enough to escape Justice Roberts's strictures would have to be as broad as Hamilton's proposal in the convention: Let Congress legislate on all matters whatsoever. Under the sweep of such a provision Congress might order burned every historical work that mentions Russia and expel every teacher who refers to the subject. "You pays your money and you takes your choice."

By no means simple is the "bulwark" conception of the situation. The Supreme Court alone can stop the march of populism, socialism, and communism. That is what Joseph Choate said to the court in 1895 just before it knocked out the income-tax law. That is what the wise men of the pro-slavery party said in 1857 when the Supreme Court undertook to "settle the slavery question." It is still being repeated today.

What has history to say on that point? It cannot be sure. Sheer force can accomplish a lot in this world, for a time. Page Torquemada, P. Díaz, B. Mussolini, and A. Hitler! On the other hand sheer force may hasten revolt. John Adams said that the British sent over troops to quell a revolution that did not exist and managed to make a revolution. Such things sometimes happen too. Justice Stone shot the suggestion at Justice Roberts in the AAA case and warned him that an abuse of power may destroy it. It is for this reason that Communists want the Supreme Court to "do its worst." "When it gets dark enough we can see stars." Yes, but we cannot tell exactly whether they will be real stars or imaginary stars created by a policeman's tough stick. Many a bulwark has been busted, and matters made better—or worse—afterward.

By this time all readers who feel quite sure about things will want to stop. Uncertainty is cowardice, they will say—sheer trimming. The Constitution must be let alone. It must be amended. It must be overthrown. Those are the choices and every "honest man" must choose. That too is simple.

But perhaps the hour of dogmatic choice has not arrived. The hard-boiled historian knows that there have been hours of great decision in human affairs. Cromwell had them. So did Robespierre. So did Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln. We, the plain people, however, are in no such position of power. Those among us who are absolutely certain about what they would do if they were in the White House are deluding themselves. Nobody knows what he would actually do in circumstances other than those now surrounding him.

Two things are necessary for effective decision—knowledge and an intuitive judgment that the times are ripe. They go together. Without knowledge, intuition may head into astrology. Without intuitive judgment, knowledge may be sterile.

If action is taken before the times are ripe, the actor may lose his head or, worse, go down in a gale of laughter. There is always an element of risk in any great action, whatever the purpose or end. The result may be indefinite postponement or utter defeat, instead of the anticipated triumph. Yet those who take risks are not without uses. They may succeed. Then immortality may crown them. They may fail but mark a step onward. They may destroy, for years, for decades, perhaps forever, their own cause. Leaders in secession in 1860-61 destroyed slavery in trying to save it. Alas, that it should be so. But can history be false to its records?

Upshot? It may be well for all parties to the constitutional dispute to wait awhile. The search for and clarification of fundamental principles proceed. If we have any faith at all in human intelligence, we must pronounce that much good. The court seems to impinge upon a multitude of other things—the general context and unfolding of all things relevant, pertinent, tangent, and contingent. Big choices respecting the context may have to be made soon, but not now. In a few months the Supreme Court will render other decisions. By that time other issues will be joined and additions made to clarification. Perhaps another Hoover boom will be here and the storm will have subsided. Perhaps we may be in the midst of another major crisis, growing out of the intensification of the present dilemma.

In any case, however, we shall not be back in 1928. We shall be somewhere in the future. And those who may be directing affairs then should be made wiser by efforts to look all around and through this constitutional issue. It runs deeper than law. As the Father of the Republic knew, it runs into the very warp and woof of our economic life and our culture. In preparation for the shape of things to come there is no better source of information than the records of the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States. If for a few months the rattle and chatter of debaters and discussers could be stopped and attention devoted to the study of these records, the American nation would be better equipped for wrestling with the science and art of governance.

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The Rhineland Crisis

BY JOHN GUNTHER

London, March 20

FOUR times since 1933 Adolf Hitler, prompted by a drastic necessity to let off internal steam, has confronted the world with a gesture shocking to the morally minded. Once the gesture was domestic, thrice it has been in the foreign field. In 1933 he left the League of Nations; in 1934 he abolished Röhm and the S. A.; in 1935 he freed himself from the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles; in 1936 he denounced Locarno, and filled the Rhineland with his troops.

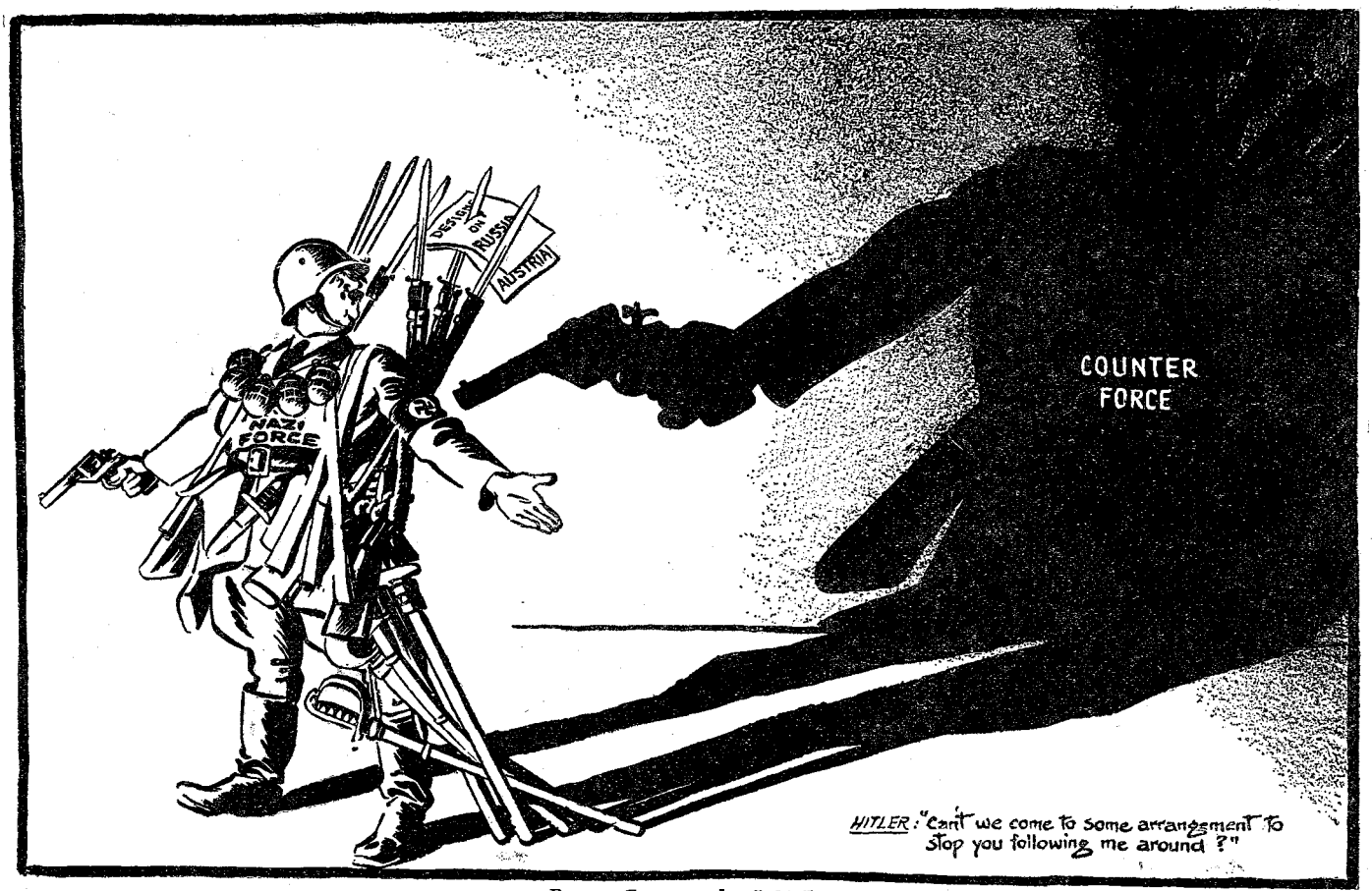
This time is not the least important. As I write in the early hours of Friday morning, Hitler can claim almost complete victory. It is true that Germany has been rebuked by the League Council, but this was an academic gesture. The overwhelming impression of those best informed is that Hitler's wary and ruthless boldness has once again presented Europe with a *fait accompli* impossible to resist. Hitler's reward for breaking the Treaty of Locarno will probably be the ultimate consideration of his "peace plan" by the powers. The French are being repaid for the policy of M. Laval. They are unhappily trying to get from the British what they can.

The bulk of Hitler's success may be seen from a consideration of its amazing details. He has the Rhineland. He has gone a goodish way toward the insertion of a wedge between British public opinion and France. He has food for another internal victory and for a possible easing of domestic tension. He has increased his prestige in Austria, Poland, and smaller countries. Why has all this happened? Largely, it appears, because British public opinion, grossly misled by so-called liberal newspapers, has permitted the pro-German faction of the British Cabinet to stifle the voices of those who thought Britain ought to stand by its Locarno signature and come to French aid.

Most of us here in the agitated corridors of St. James's Palace feel that Hitler's victory is a bad thing for Europe. And for the following reasons:

1. The collective system has received a blow from which it may take a long time to recover. Once again force, not law, has been the decisive element in the international crisis. Locarno, which has been the bastion of peace for the past ten years, has disappeared as far as Germany is concerned. The League is weakened.

2. Mussolini is a winner. It is now obvious to a nine-year-old child or even a member of the editorial staff of certain London dailies that oil sanctions have scarcely a chance of being applied and that France, aggrieved at Britain's refusal to interpret Locarno literally, can hardly



Peace Gesture, by LOW

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be expected to support Britain in further attempts to throttle Italy. As Litvinov said in a private conversation the other day, "We thought we were rehearsing for a play, but if there isn't going to be a play, why rehearse?"

3. Hitler, if he has his way, will have a position of approximate safety in the West, and perhaps in the South, while his hands are free for the East. It should not be forgotten that the most significant thing said by any statesman during these past tumultuous days was the announcement of Stanley Baldwin immediately after the crisis broke that Britain should bend itself toward a tripartite friendship with France and Germany. It would be premature to talk of the formation of an anti-Soviet bloc. But Hitler's enmity to the Soviet Union is subcutaneous and ineffaceable. And anything which tends to strengthen him in the West means danger to the Soviets in the East.

The basic disingenuousness of German tactics was never shown better than in Ribbentrop's speech today. What he said in effect was that Germany promised to behave herself hereafter if this "final" breach of international obligation were condoned. He said France, not Germany, was the real violator of the treaty. Thus he was in a position of promising not to violate any more treaties while denying that he had violated this one.

Britain and France, it is quite true, are in process of trying to negotiate an exchange agreement between the British and French general staffs. One thing only could compensate for Hitler's coup, namely, an outright Franco-British alliance in the West. But this has been by no means achieved so far. Eden has announced that Britain will provisionally stand by its obligations to protect Belgium and France from overt attack. He could hardly have said less. And any freezing of the frontier on the West only makes the East more dangerous.

It is quite true, also, that Hitler has offered an elaborate, comprehensive peace plan which will be discussed by the Locarno and other powers after the Council concludes its present job. This plan has been shot full of holes by Litvinov. Non-aggression pacts—there have been some 200 in the post-war years—have not proved effective. Pacts of mutual assistance Hitler eschews—because they could be effective. Apart from the question of the practical utility of what the Germans propose is the matter of their good faith. Hitler prefaces a request for new treaties by tearing up old ones. As a truth-teller he is a bad risk.

Why have the British permitted Hitler to succeed so far? The reasons are several. The British are hard-headed enough to know that from the first moment the only way to get the Germans out of the Rhineland would have been to fight. And though they have been so severe in the Mediterranean with threats against Italy, removal by force of the Germans from German territory is another matter. Again the British feel that the time has come for a new deal all around. They may not have great faith in Hitler's proposals or in his word of honor, but they think they can use the confusion of the present situation for building a new structure of European "security" to their advantage. What shape this structure will take—built on the sand of Hitler's plan—no one knows. Meantime, Germany, the only country in Europe capable of plunging Europe into general war, has won a hand. The new cards are in the fist of the potential aggressor.

Hitler Stiffens the French Right

BY M. E. RAVAGE

Paris, March 11

NO SOONER had the echoes of Hitler's Reichstag speech reached this side of the Rhine than a vast hope stirred the bosoms of the French nationalists. The latest German threat was immeasurably graver than any that had preceded it. It was hardly a step removed from invasion. It brought the danger of war within the range of practical and immediate possibilities. The press and the politicians of the right reacted to the menace with the same anxiety, alarm, and resentment as other Frenchmen, only with rather more stir and emphasis. But the national calamity was, for internal purposes, an opportunity; and within twenty-four hours the moral of the dread event was drawn: in the face of the national foe, national union. This meant a non-partisan coalition ministry, headed by the late rejected Laval or someone of his stripe, to replace the present predominantly radical government. Even that, of course, was merely a preliminary. The war threat was to serve the larger end of putting courage into the ranks of the badly demoralized Front National, thus improving its chances in the approaching general election.

So promptly did the fascist leaders, Taittinger and Ybarnegaray, seize the windfall, so speedily did the agitation for reshuffling the government, even for dissolving the chambers, find responsive echoes, that in the opposite camp no little credence was lent to the report that the Germans had timed their bombshell to explode at this particular moment in order, among other objectives, to help boost their brethren-in-doctrine across the frontier. The story has even gained currency that Eugene Schneider, head of the Creusot armament works, discouraged by the decline of the fascist leagues and frightened by the program of the Front Populaire, which proposed to lay hands on the Bank of France and the munitions and other key industries, had through his confreres Krupp and Thyssen got the Germans to advance their schedule.

This, if not actual fact, is not necessarily fanciful. Such maneuvers are classic in European political history. In any event, it would be merely repaying one good turn with

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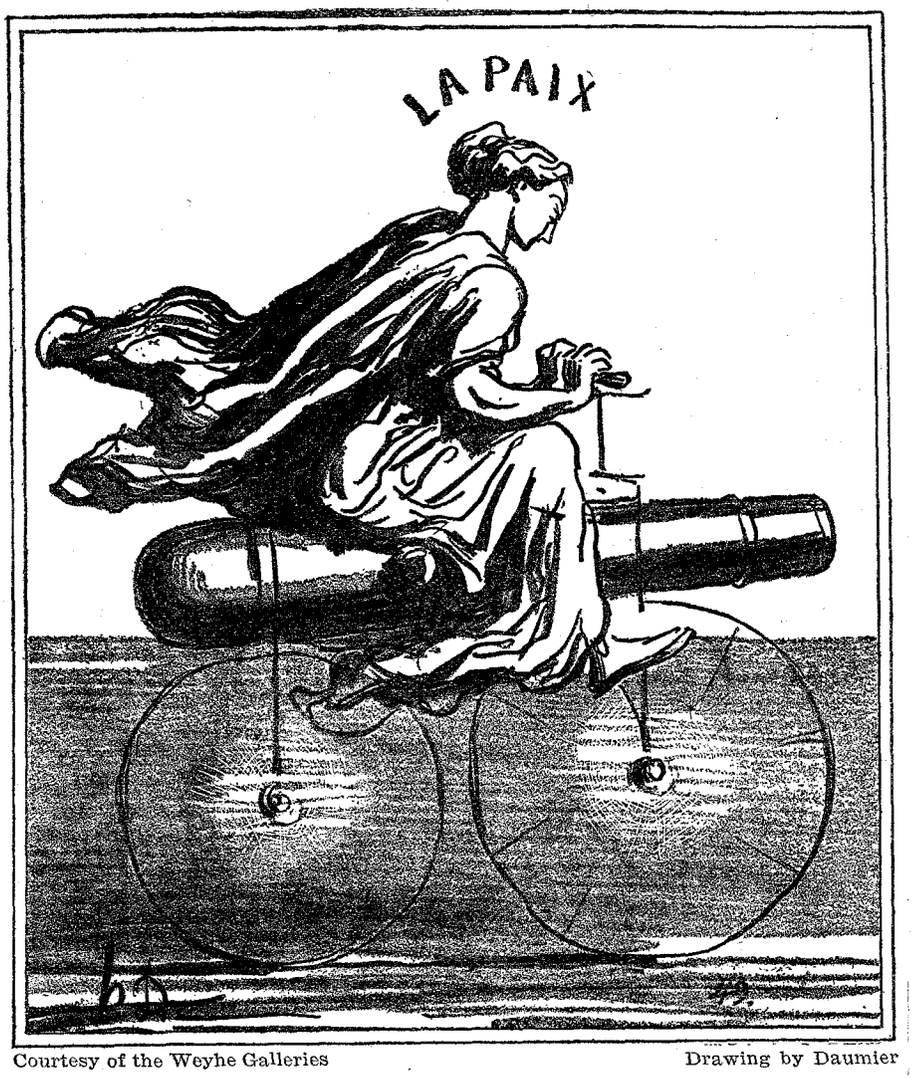
another. The French Nationalists from Clemenceau on have succeeded by their intransigence toward the German republic in hoisting the German war party into the saddle; Hitler-Blomberg-Neurath could scarcely do otherwise than contribute their bit to save the Front National from certain defeat at the hands of the Front Populaire. But Berlin had more substantial reasons for favoring the right in Paris. All Frenchmen, regardless of party coloring, fear Germany and live in terror of that seventy-million-headed giant recovering his strength and breaking into a rampage of vengeance for past injuries. The left parties aggravate matters by their hatred of the present rulers beyond the Rhine. They hate Hitler and his consorts not only on principle, but because, having all along labored to conciliate Germany and thus obtain a lasting peace with her, they find themselves, thanks to the criminal bungling of Poincaré, confronted with a regime which they know to be irreconcilable. The nationalists in France, on the other hand, hate and fear Germany, but they worship Hitler. He is a fellow after their own hearts. He has crushed the German labor, revolutionary, and pacifist rabble, murdered and imprisoned their leaders, and by this summary process has in three short years wiped out all but the last traces of the defeat of 1918. The only thing they have against him is that he is on the wrong side of the river.



Courtesy of the Weyhe Galleries Drawing by Daumier

My Bicycle

That is one reason that the powers in Germany would rather see in the next French Chamber a majority of the Front National than of the Front Populaire. There are others. Hitler, it should be recalled, before tearing up the Locarno treaty and "symbolically" remilitarizing the Rhineland, made a declaration to the French people in a sensational interview, assuring them of his friendship and affection and of his intention to revise "Mein Kampf." It is generally understood here that by some strange slip-up the interview, which was designed to influence the French Chamber of Deputies and thus halt the ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact, got into print a day too late. The acts of the following Saturday would therefore seem to have been intended in part as a warning to the members of the French Senate to consider carefully before emulating their colleagues in the Palais Bourbon. If that was the intention, the whole enterprise was of course a complete fiasco. It is a safe prediction that before these words are in print the Senate will have voted favorably on the Soviet treaty by a much larger majority than the most sanguine would have thought possible five days ago.* It is not merely that the senators resent the attempt of Berlin to dictate to them; with the German army on the Rhine the friendship and alliance of the U. S. S. R. have become an urgent need of French survival.

This somewhat disappointing result of *Schrecklichkeit* was perhaps not unexpected in Berlin. And it does not prevent the *Realpolitiker* of the Wilhelmstrasse from imagining things no less vain. They seem to think that a Front National government in France, because anti-Communist at home, would let the Soviet pact, even if ratified, become a dead letter. They take at its face value the noisy opposition to the pact, intended purely for internal consumption, of a certain fraction of the press, and overlook the fact that the French general staff is whole-heartedly for it, as are many leading industrialists, to say nothing of most of the French people. And they, the Germans, seem not to hear that the very nationalists who a few short weeks ago thought hanging too good for the 140 French deputies who urged sanctions against the aggressor in Ethiopia now clamor far more loudly for the same penalties against the aggressor on the Rhine.

On the other hand, the Germans would rather, when the crisis comes, have a right government in Paris, for the reasons, good and bad, already enumerated and for one more besides. The Germans have not forgotten, if some

*The Franco-Soviet pact was ratified by the French Senate on March 12.

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French politicians act as if they had, that in each previous step they took toward the liquidation of the Versailles system they had facing them across the Rhine a government composed of men hardly to be mistaken for Socialists or Communists or even radicals. It was a nationalist ministry that perforce swallowed the repudiation of the reparations debt; it was another of the same color that let the Germans get away with the revival of conscription, after staging the solemn comedy at Stresa. Above all, it was Poincaré himself who marched his 40,000 men up the coal hills of the Ruhr and then rather foolishly marched them down again, thereby proclaiming to the world in general and to the Germans in particular that short of war there was nothing to be done against the determined recalcitrance of a great and injured nation. If Poincaré could do nothing against that nation—humiliated, demoralized, and disarmed—what will Laval, Doumergue, or even Colonel de la Rocque do against that same nation—confident, intoxicated with its new-found strength, and armed to the teeth?

The Germans have not forgotten. But does the average French voter remember? Premier Sarraut, a man with no nonsense about him, has succeeded in squashing the maneuvers to disrupt, on the pretext of national danger, his majority and his government. It is altogether possible that he may hold both together for the few weeks that he has to go until the elections. What then? There is the big question. Before March 7 not a man in France, whatever his political coloring or preference, but conceded to the Front Populaire an overwhelming triumph. The results at the polls on April 26 and May 3 may yet, in spite of the clouded international sky, bear out that forecast. The admirable solidarity of the reunited General Confederation of Labor, which concluded its first congress as a single body on the very day the thunderbolt fell, was a heartening sign. The leaders of the left profess to be as confident of victory as ever. Some go so far as to predict that the brutal provocation from across the Rhine will only swell the ranks of the left. They may be right. If their prophecy comes true it will spell a tribute to the courage, the reasoned conviction, and the clear-sighted political realism of the plain man of this democracy.

Slum-Clearance Farce

BY KAREN DASH

SINCE 1932 public-spirited people in Detroit have been manifesting sharp interest in slum conditions. Social workers have exposed painful facts concerning the misery and degradation of Negro families living in Detroit's East Side slum district. These Negroes are unemployed and destitute through no fault of their own. John F. Ballenger, Wayne County Relief Administrator, has placed the blame squarely where it belongs—on the shoulders of Detroit's big industrialists.

Public indignation has been further stirred by the statistics from city-wide social surveys which show the results of unsanitary and shameful housing conditions. The fifty-block area three blocks east of Woodward Avenue and about a mile from Detroit's City Hall, which was selected as the first site for a slum-clearance project, shows excessively high rates in disease and all social delinquencies. Crime is 7½ times the city average. Juvenile delinquency is 10¼ times, infant mortality is 1½ times, and pneumonia is 8 times higher than the average for the city as a whole. The tuberculosis death-rate for Site Number 1 is 15 times higher than in Site Number 30, a somewhat better section of Detroit. One-third of the families living in this fifty-block area are dependent on public welfare. The average monthly rent for a family is $8, and the average family income (1933) is $300 a year.

On September 9, 1935, ten thousand cheering persons, the majority of them Negroes, jammed the vicinity of 651 Benton Street, Detroit, as Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt formally opened work on the slum-clearance project. With a wave of her handkerchief she signaled to a group of workmen to pull down the first house. The building crashed in a cloud of dust, and the $6,680,000 project was under way. Mrs. Roosevelt then gave a short address.

The ceremony over, Mrs. Roosevelt returned to Washington, confident that all was well. But the Detroit program did not "go ahead" as she hoped. In the months that followed many old houses were torn down, a hundred Negro families were ruthlessly ousted from their homes, but not one new building is in process of construction. The East Side slum-clearance program, discussed for over two years, has resulted so far in exactly nothing.

Late last autumn I started on a house-to-house survey of the Negro slum district known as Site Number 1. Getting off the Charlevoix crosstown car at Eliot Street, near Saint Antoine, I stopped at the first house I saw which had a condemnation notice pasted to the door. It was a miserable shack in the last stages of decay, occupied as place of business and home by a Negro tailor and his family.

The man was at first afraid to talk. He said he had been handed two weeks' notice to get out. He was deeply worried about where he could find a place to run his shop and keep his family. The rental of this shanty was $10 a month, and the man declared that although he had been hunting around for some time he could not find another location as cheap. No information about the new houses to be constructed on the site had been offered him. He said he was very poor, and that he would have to borrow the money to pay moving expenses. He was very nervous while talking; he kept asking me not to quote him, or use

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his name, as he did not want to "get in wrong with the government."

The house next door, in similarly bad condition, was occupied by Mrs. A—, an elderly Negro woman, and her son. The son, formerly employed by the Briggs Manufacturing Company, is now a "junker." He earns the family living by going around with a hand-cart collecting rags and old papers. The average income of these people is $6 every two weeks. The woman is almost totally blind.

Four days before, she said, a man brought the notice of eviction. He refused Mrs. A— any definite information about when she must get out. "Right away!" he said. Mrs. A— was panic-stricken. She had no idea where to move to, or where to turn for advice. She had never even heard of the Relocation Office, which is supposed to offer assistance to all the ousted families.

Thirteen persons, four adults and nine children, were living in an unheated five-room hovel over on Rowena Street, near Beaubien. A thin, tired-looking Negro woman came to the door, carrying a child in her arms. Inside the house, which was shabby and forlorn beyond all description, children were swarming everywhere. They were dressed in rags, and not one of them had shoes or stockings. The mother, Mrs. B—, apologized for their appearance. Five of the youngsters were her own; four were the children of her dead sister. The Welfare had promised them clothing and shoes so they could go to school, but hadn't got around yet actually to give the needed articles.

Mrs. B—'s husband was out looking for a job. He had worked for the Ford Motor Company from December, 1922, until July, 1926. He had then worked for the Western Waterproofing Company for two years, and for the City Garbage until 1931. He had been unable to find steady employment since that time.

Mrs. B— said she didn't worry much about being evicted. "Things are so bad with us," she said simply, "they just couldn't be any worse."

This woman nurses her youngest child, a boy two and a half years old, at her breast. The Welfare is not giving out any more milk tickets, and Mrs. B— finds she can supply milk herself by drinking cocoa made with water.

Albert C— has a coal and wood store on St. Antoine Street. When I came in to talk to him, he was hacking lumber into small pieces to sell for firewood. He said he was barely "getting by" in his present location, where the rent is $6 per month. He had built up a small neighborhood trade, and was worried sick by the sudden eviction notice. "I'm perfectly willing to move," he said, "but I know I won't be able to find another store at $6."

He had been several times to the Relocation Office but they had no help to offer. There are no vacant stores available in the neighborhood, and no stores which can be rented for $6 in any Negro section whatever. Albert C—'s average monthly income is $18.

The Relocation Office is in a vacant bank building at the corner of Erskine and Hastings streets, in the heart of the Negro district. The information clerk, a young white man, was surly and suspicious of me. "We are doing everything possible for these people," he said. "They are mostly junkers, anyway. We give them about two weeks to find a new place and get moved."

"What help do you offer?"

"Well, we keep a list of houses for rent. Better houses, mostly, than what they're used to. But they won't take them."

"Why not?"

He shrugged. "Oh, because they cost three or four dollars more a month!"

"What do you do about the families who haven't the money to move?" I asked.

"They must apply to the Welfare," he snapped. "We have nothing to do with that angle."

The District Office of the Welfare Department is at Alfred and Russell streets. A young man at the information desk told me that the slum-clearance project was bringing them more trouble than they knew how to handle. Since enough houses at low rentals could not possibly be found, the evicted families would simply have to "double up," he said, and share whatever hole or corner could be found for them. Miss Clara Kramer of the District Office confirmed this statement.

I asked Miss Kramer how much time was allowed the evicted families to find a new place and vacate their homes. "Legally," she replied, "they have thirty days. But

Courtesy of the Downtown Gallery

Drawing by Peggy Bacon

Colored Folks

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we want to get them out quick, so we're telling them they've got to be out in anywhere from five days to two weeks."

I began to investigate the homes available for Negro tenants. Since an overwhelming majority of the families living in the condemned area are paying from $3 to $10 per month for rent, I made up my mind to look only at houses within this price range. I had to give up this plan because a full day's search proved to me that there were simply no houses to be had at less than $10. On the following day, therefore, I walked from nine in the morning until dusk, looking at the houses offered for rent at from $10 to $20 per month.

In Alfred Street I saw a house with a "For Rent" sign on it. It was a small, gray frame house, partitioned inside to serve for four families. The wooden steps leading to the front porch were completely rotted away. I groped my way through a dark hall to the vacant flat in the rear. There were three medium-sized rooms in each of which the filth and decay were indescribable. The rain beat in through the broken windows and trickled across the soggy wooden floors. The wallpaper hung in streamers. There was no stove to heat the flat, no gas, no electric lights. Window shades were completely missing, and in many places the plaster had fallen away, exposing the bare laths of wall and ceiling. I took a look at the kitchen. Rags were stuffed in the broken windows. There were no faucets in the rusty old sink, no covering on the floor, no cook stove, no icebox. In the bathroom a bathtub stood in one corner. Three of its legs were gone, and it was not connected with the water pipes. The toilet had obviously been out of order for months.

This flat was offered for rent by a Detroit real-estate company at $12 per month. I called up the office of this firm, commented on the bad condition of the house, and asked whether they would not make some essential repairs before a new tenant moved in. The girl who answered the telephone said that the owner had no intention of doing anything whatever to improve the flat. The prospective tenant could take it or leave it.

During the next two weeks I looked at many other houses and talked with various Negroes who run real-estate offices and rental agencies in the vicinity. Everywhere I heard the same story. There is a serious shortage of houses for Negro tenants, and the landlords are making hay while the sun shines. Even "shack" prices are from $12 to $20. The majority are without even a pretense of a bathroom, such as the Alfred Street house offered. Houses that the owners were glad to get $4 a month for a short time ago can now be rented within an hour for $15 and upward.

During the two months I spent making this survey of actual conditions among the Negro population of Detroit, I was also trying to arrange an interview with Mrs. Josephine Gomon, secretary of the Detroit Housing Commission. I finally got an appointment to meet Mrs. Gomon in her cheerful and pleasant offices in the new Water Board building. Mrs. Gomon spoke very hopefully about the Detroit Housing Commission's plans. She described the new housing soon to be erected in the Negro slum districts as modern, beautiful buildings with all sorts of conveniences, including play areas for the children and recreation facilities for adults. Rents, said Mrs. Gomon, would probably be from $16 to $25 per month.

I asked whether the evicted families were not having trouble finding homes at rents they could afford. Mrs. Gomon admitted this, but added that the one hundred families already evicted were managing somehow. "It's just a few dollars' increase," she said.

"What about the families on relief rolls?" I persisted. "How can they pay even a few dollars' increase when their allowance for rent is already so small?"

To this, Mrs. Gomon replied that the Welfare would increase relief checks to cover higher rentals. (This, unfortunately, is not true. John F. Ballenger, Wayne County Relief Administrator, has put into effect a 20 per cent cut in all welfare aid, and this slash affects every family on the Detroit Welfare.)

On leaving I asked Mrs. Gomon whether the sum allowed for rent would be enough, in any case, to permit families on relief, evicted from condemned houses, to live in the new apartments when they were ready for occupancy. Mrs. Gomon replied very definitely that it would not. She went on to say that the new buildings were being put up for the benefit of industrious, low-income families—not necessarily for the people now living in the slum areas but for any family that could afford to pay the moderate rental of from $16 to $25 a month!

A week later I went back to the Relocation Office and asked to be given a list of the names and new addresses of the one hundred families, who according to Mrs. Gomon, had been successfully moved from their old homes and established in new locations. I said frankly that I wished to see how and where they were living, and whether their condition had been improved by the change. My request was met with an equally frank refusal. The clerk said he had been given definite instructions not to hand out such a list.

I spent the last week of my survey tramping the Negro section trying to find some of the relocated families. Many of the houses I had visited earlier had been razed. Their former occupants had disappeared without leaving an address. Eventually I found six families which had been "successfully relocated." Five had been unable to find decent homes within their means and were living "doubled up" with other families. Children were sleeping three and four in a bed or on the floor. One family—a grandmother, man and wife, and sixteen-year-old daughter—had rented a five-room flat at $27.50 per month, and were taking in four men roomers, to help cover the cost of the rent. In no case was the condition of these people improved by the change. Instead, they were much worse off than before, especially those families which had been forced to "double up" with others.

These are the facts, and further comment would be superfluous. It seems painfully clear that slum clearance is just another New Deal measure—a fake, a humbug, and a joke.

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Struggle in Marble

BY ANITA MARBURG

THE placid Vermont scene has been tense for five months with a struggle between the marble workers of Rutland County and the Proctor-controlled Vermont Marble Company. Three years ago a bitter granite strike of 1,500 workers of the Rock of Ages Company broke out in Barre, Vermont. Despite bayonet attacks and tear-gas bombs, the news of the strike reached New York City five weeks after its beginning, tucked into the real-estate page as an interesting item for companies needing granite. Today the marble workers have behind them a citizens' organization with headquarters in New York City—the United Committee to Aid Vermont Workers. The strike has been debated in Congress, and a mass-meeting is being held in New York on March 27.

It was this citizens' group that on February 29 sent a committee of seventy-five men and women, headed by Rockwell Kent, into the five marble towns to make an investigation and report its findings. United in a single effort were trade unionists from New York and Vermont, writers, Vermont property owners, teachers, students from Dartmouth and Bennington, and one American legionnaire. The marble hearings took place in the crowded town hall of West Rutland, the testimony came hour after hour, measuredly, soberly, with now and then an emotional reinforcement from the striker audience. Some 800 workers composed the audience, filling every seat downstairs and in the balcony, standing quietly in the rear and along the sides; mothers wearing tams, fathers in short workmen's coats, children sprawling over adult laps. Speeches were punctuated with babies' cries; a woman who gave testimony left her year-old boy in the lap of a committee member and spoke as long as the baby would allow.

What is the strike about? Basically it is a life-and-death struggle between two worlds over wages and freedom. On the one hand stands a proprietory family concern, controlled by three generations of Proctors; on the other stand skilled workers, born in the Vermont mountains, who have contributed their lives to marble. The fate of the industry, founded on tombstones, is now tied in the main to building construction. During the slump in building between 1933 and 1936, an enormous employment shrinkage went on—a drop from 2,200 to 800 workers—and with this shrinkage has come a policy of wage cuts which descend upon the men as a notice from the management, without warning or discussion. In February, 1934, the workers, acting under the NRA, took their own fate in hand and organized a union. One worker testified that "of course the company tried to put a company union over on us, but it didn't work." The vote came back 58 per cent for an international union, 10 per cent for a company union, and the rest for no union at all, but the company still refused to deal with the men's organization. In December, 1934, the Regional Labor Board of Boston backed up the workers' demand for a union, but the company's attitude was not modified. By October, 1935, antagonisms had been further increased by wage cuts, and a small walk-out resulted. The answer of the management was to refuse any increase in wages (even two cents on an hourly wage of twenty-five cents); the answer of the men, further pressed by reductions and by a reclassification of skilled workers as common laborers, was a strike declaration in November involving all quarries and factories, and 600 of the 800 employees had the courage to walk out and stay out.

Neither state nor federal officials have thus far provided a solution for marble. Not much was expected of the State Industrial Commissioner, Clarence R. White, an appointee of ex-Governor Wilson, who was a Proctor-supported governor. His most radical suggestion was that the company "look again at its balance-sheet" and consider "its moral and social obligation." Governor Charles M. Smith, white-haired and sixty-seven, supposedly a political opponent of the Proctors, is nevertheless too smart to antagonize influential business. So far, he told the investigating committee, he has confined his activities to pressure for the White report, and friendly talks to company directors. He said that the Proctor management is somewhat to blame: "they were giving their workers starvation wages; instead of that they should have fired half of them." In the meantime the state offers no relief to desperate strike families, but supplies deputy sheriffs to the Proctors—a weekly gift costing between $800 and $1,700.

At last the federal labor conciliator, a little studious man, Charles J. Post, who later had the temerity to appear at the hearings, came to study the strike, and sent a secret report to Secretary Perkins on February 13. The Post report, according to the release of the Federated Press, is scorching: there is piled-up evidence of poverty, of company tyranny, and of sheriff-evoked violence. This valuable report had the misfortune to appear before, rather than after, a national election. Evidently poverty and tyranny cannot exist in 1936. But Governor Smith has at last been galvanized into some action by the speech of Representative Marcantonio on the floor of Congress. Under the pressure of publicity he has called a conference of company and union officials.

Wages for full employment were $13.30 a week. Because of reduced working hours they actually averaged between $5 and $7. After company deductions for rent, water, light, insurance, coal bill, and cow pasture, they were often reduced to sixty cents, twenty cents, two cents, or merely a yellow voucher marked "No check." On the

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other hand wages could be supplemented by relief. Now that the men are on strike little help is forthcoming, since several overseers of the poor are Proctor employees. A mother of six children testified that her milk allowance of two quarts a day was reduced to one, and that the overseer said, "You can keep the children quiet on water." Another, having but one pair of underclothes per child as protection against a Vermont winter, was told, "Put them to bed when you wash the underclothes." The state of Vermont has taxed its citizens to supply food to workingmen, while the Vermont Marble Company has been paying 5 per cent on its cumulative preferred stock.

Who are the Proctors of Proctor, who take no reasonable steps to conciliate 600 men, faithful workers and skilled workers, and now deliver eviction edicts to 186 families? In 1880 Colonel Redfield Proctor began combining competing companies, and made out of them the largest marble concern in the country. He established a tradition of benevolence, endowing three churches, a library, a Y. M. C. A., and constructing a twenty-two-ton marble monument to Old Charley, his Civil War horse. His grandson, the present Redfield Proctor, has been active in Republican politics in Vermont, was governor of the state, and is now a director of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and a trustee of Middlebury and Vassar Colleges. He is willing to offer charity to docile individuals, but when living wages are asked for by independent workers he has "nothing to say." There is something terrifying in this combination of refinement and cold tyranny.

Besides the extensive properties in Vermont, the company has quarries, factories, and offices in the states of Washington, California, Texas, Colorado, and even in Alaska. It supplied a goodly share of the $900,000 worth of marble in the Chrysler building, and the $982,000 worth in the Empire State building. Through its Washington lobbyist it secured three major jobs in the capital —the Red Cross Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Supreme Court building, the marble in the last-named building costing $3,800,000. In normal years its gross business amounts to as much as $8,000,000, with profits of something like $800,000. At present it has $5,000,000 worth of government contracts pending and a million dollars due it for work already finished.

Is this just another chapter in a story as familiar by now as the American scene? A company with wide holdings can afford to wait while 600 workers are squeezed out. However, the inert marble still remains in the ground. If it is to be worked at all, it is not the Proctors of Proctor that have the skill to do so. A story with the same beginning concluded differently in granite three years ago. On March 31, 1933, the Rock of Ages Corporation published a letter to its employees: "So long as the present management of this corporation is in control of its affairs, no power on earth will ever compel us to operate our quarries or a single one of our plants on any kind of union basis." These were mighty words from rugged individualists. But business considerations had to come first. Despite the defiance of the Rock of Ages Corporation, granite today is thoroughly unionized, and wages are from 50 per cent to 100 per cent higher than those in marble. In February the corporation signed a new contract for a year with the Quarrymen's Union. This success provides a living incentive to the strikers in Rutland.

A victory for marble will determine the character of the Vermont labor movement. Judged by numbers this movement is insignificant. Vermont is principally an agricultural state, and even among the industrial workers unionism is not very strong. But the marble strike has an importance in the labor movement out of proportion to the numbers involved. Labor stands as the sole force working against the Republican Party in the state. Last August the State Federation officially indorsed the Farmer-Labor Party. Barre is now the active labor center in Vermont. In order to make any impression on the reactionary Republican phalanx it needs the organized help of the Rutland workers. The struggle in marble has thus not only an economic importance. It is a sector on the political labor front as well.

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The Consumer Front

BY RUTH BRINDZE

THAT usurious rates are charged for the privilege of making "easy payments" is pretty generally known, and that even the government in its 5 per cent FHA plan permits interest charges of 9.7 per cent is no secret. Still, the figures compiled by the Committee on Consumer Credit, appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts, and the Special Commission appointed by the Massachusetts General Court are sufficiently shocking to focus attention on the evils of the instalment business. In the purchase of new automobiles the commission found that the lowest rate charged was 10 per cent, the highest 36 per cent, and the average 25 per cent. These charges are low compared with an average of 47 per cent for used cars and one charge amounting to 881 per cent on a radio. There is only one reported instance of a true 6 per cent rate. A piano company whose name is not given said the rate was 6 per cent. "It *was* 6 per cent." (The italics are the commission's.) Besides the comparatively well-known practice of concealing and misrepresenting credit charges, both state bodies report the general use of the rebate by which the dealer collects both from the finance company and from the buyer, overcharging and defrauding by insurance coverage and by the use of unfair contracts.

Instalment buying is again increasing, and both committee and commission have proposed remedial legislation. The commission bill would require the licensing of retail finance companies and their operation under direct supervision of the banking department. The committee bill, wider in scope, applies to all instalment sellers and provides a standard form for instalment contracts on which the interest charges are stated as a given per centum per month calculated upon the unpaid principal balance; the entire contract is unenforceable if the seller fails to comply with the regulations.

IN THE little war with big implications which the cosmetics industry has been carrying on against the authorities of the state of Maine both sides are claiming a victory. The fight started when the 1935 session of the legislature passed a new cosmetics law providing for the registration of cosmetics sold within the state and giving the Department of Health power to refuse to register preparations containing "injurious substances." An annual license fee of $.50 is to be charged. This is Maine's second attempt to regulate cosmetics; two years ago a law was enacted but its enforcement was enjoined on constitutional grounds in an action brought by Bourjois, Inc. Now Bourjois is again leading the fighting-mad cosmetics manufacturers, and in a test case is attempting to prove that the new act also is unconstitutional. Last week's decision by the Statutory Court denying the Bourjois motion for a temporary injunction on the ground that there was no evidence of interference with interstate commerce left the legal battle undecided. Meanwhile the Toilet Goods Association advises its members to defer registration until further notice, and the Department of Health is notifying retailers that all sales must be confined to products which have been analyzed and approved.

The trade press rants about the injustice of permitting each state to levy a licensing fee upon nationally advertised products. The manufacturers are clearly opposed to any regulation. They fear the power granted to the Department of Health to prohibit the sale of injurious preparations.

ON THE national front the Food and Drug Administration has also been encountering difficulties. It was economy day for the House Appropriation Committee when the administration's 1937 budget came up for approval. With election-year thrift the holders of the House purse refused the $525,000 increase, saying that the enforcement of the Food and Drug Act could "be well met" without any increase in budget. Administrator Campbell, who presumably knows more about the cost of administering the act, disagreed emphatically, estimating the sum needed for "reasonably satisfactory" enforcement at $5,000,000, or $3,000,000 more than the recommended budget. It is true that the administration's budget was increased last year by $275,000, which brought it to a grand total of $1,968,637, or a little more than a penny per person per year for the enforcement of the Food and Drug Act, the Insecticide Act, the Caustic Poison Act, the Milk Act, the Tea Act, the Naval Stores Act, and the other work performed by the Food and Drug Administration. As it is, there are only seventy-eight inspectors charged with protecting the food-and-drug supply of the nation.

The little stick wielded by the Food and Drug Administration has again been brought down on two profitable food-adulteration rackets—one in salad oil, the other in fruit juices. The oil men have been substituting tea-seed oil for the product of the olive, a fraud which can now be easily discovered by a new laboratory test. Cosmos Food of Lynn, Massachusetts, and A. J. Capone, operating as the De Luca Olive Oil Company of New York, whose products are nationally distributed, have according to a recent statement of the Department of Agriculture been particularly active in the field. Packers of fruit juices have profited by a cheaper form of adulteration. Tap water and sugar are now so regularly added to canned "pure" fruit juices that the administration has issued a notice to the trade (effective July 1) that action will be taken against all watered stock whether or not consumers are warned, as they occasionally are now, by the words "sugar syrup added."

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

FOUR weeks of flirtation with a bit of pneumonia have given me plenty of time to think, or at least to ponder the American and the European scene. Naturally Hitler's latest coup has engrossed me most. It is less than seventeen years since Woodrow Wilson returned from Paris and pronounced the Treaty of Versailles entirely good. Today there is practically nothing left of that treaty. It has been destroyed by its own baseness, by its flat defiance of every rule of decency and humanity, of Christianity. *The Nation* was foremost in the American journalistic field in declaring that it divided the world into two camps, those who were for the "madness of Versailles" and those who were against it. But surely none of us dreamed then that the blood-cemented edifice erected at Versailles would collapse as rapidly as it has, or that the treaty itself would be so soon kicked to pieces by a man who at that time was still in a shabby corporal's uniform, an ex-house painter with no means and apparently with no future.

One must hand it to Adolf Hitler. Wherever he gets his ideas, whether from Rosenberg or Ribbentrop, or whether he conceives them himself, he carries them out with shrewdness and what, in the Boers, used to be called "slimness." Of course he has the great advantage of being able to act without the slightest regard for truth or consistency or international decency. But he skilfully picks the moment for his steps of defiance, a moment when the Allies are especially bothered by something very difficult and important, and so far he has got away with practically everything that he has undertaken. His latest move has again aroused the bulk of the people of Germany to the highest enthusiasm for him, just when there had been a steady decrease in the popular enthusiasm. Whereas Mussolini has once more bound the Italians to himself and his rule by a costly, and what may still prove to be a disastrous, foreign war, Hitler achieves the same result by tearing up the Locarno treaty and wiping his feet upon that which remains of Versailles. More than that, he has so skilfully worded his defiance as to confuse public opinion abroad, notably in England, where those who realize that wars lead to nothing but unmitigated suffering and misery are really affected by Hitler's offer of new treaties to guarantee peace for twenty-five years.

The overwhelming difficulty in the way of meeting Hitler halfway on any such proposal is that no figure in history has ever surpassed him in falsity, in deceit, in his willingness to stoop to anything to achieve his ends. Every word that he says today about his desire for peace is contradicted by his own words in his book, "Mein Kampf." The treaties of Locarno were not forced upon Germany; they were of its own seeking. They were unlimited in their duration, and what he offers in return is something much less worth while and carefully limited for a period of years. If the other nations give in to him now, if the League of Nations allows him to go unpunished for his violation of the treaties, it is, of course, only a question of time when he will move again. Whether he will strike to the East or suddenly overrun Austria, or demand colonies under threat of outlawing all the debts now owed by Germany, he is certain to act. His position as a dictator calls for it; so does the growing economic stress under which Germany lives—a stress that will grow greater the more rapidly Germany is rearmed.

The most alarming thing about it all is that the statesmen of England and France and Belgium and the other countries are so without vision, so unable to move constructively to deal with this man who menaces the peace of all the world. One would think that after Hitler had committed his country to rearmament the MacDonalds and Baldwins and Lavals and Flandins would immediately have turned their attention to the demilitarized district and invited him to a parley in regard to it, a move which would effectively have deprived him of any initiative in the matter. They could have made the terms; they could have purchased Germany's return to the League of Nations by doing the obviously right thing of giving it the control of its own territory. Instead, bankrupt English statesmanship could think of nothing to do but to make a naval agreement with Germany; it was too stupid to see that that meant, first, recognition if not approval of German naval rearmament and, second, the risk of alienating France at the crucial moment when the two countries had to stand together against Italy in Ethiopia.

I hear it said, it is easy to criticize but what would you do? Fortunately I am not compelled to decide. But I do know this, that the time has come for the League and the former Allies to act with great vigor, with the same daring and aggressiveness with which Hitler has acted. They can at least match his flagrant defiance of the public opinion of the world by some plain truths as to just how far they will permit him to go before, in self-defense, they decide to put on sanctions, to send Germany to Coventry. In other words, unity, vigor, and forcefulness are now absolutely indicated if the Allied nations and the League are to head off Hitler's suddenly overrunning Austria, or Memel, or Malmédy, or Eupen, or again seizing the provinces restored to Denmark by the Treaty of Versailles. Sooner or later there must be a united front against Hitler or Germany will impose its will upon all Europe—no, not *its* will, but the will of Adolf Hitler, Goebbels, Göring, and the other decadents and militarists by whom Hitler is surrounded.

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BROUN'S PAGE

I HAVE never been very enthusiastic about organizations of veterans. Perhaps this dates back to the days when Uncle Ned used to have Sunday dinner with us. Uncle Ned belonged to the G. A. R. and had been at the Second Battle of Bull Run. And you know how it is with revivals. I wonder whether the first battle was as tiresome.

Maybe it is unfair to indict a whole Grand Army on the basis of a single member. Uncle Ned was wounded in the leg, and to his dying day he walked with a pronounced limp. He was strictly a one-battle man, but after all, he was related to my father and he had served his country.

Mince pie, Sunday dinner, and Uncle Ned are always associated in my mind. Curiously enough I don't particularly dislike mince pie although naturally I prefer apple, or lemon meringue. Coffee kept Uncle Ned awake and so we didn't give him any. While my father and mother were having theirs, Uncle Ned used to act out the Second Battle of Bull Run or rather that part of it in which he was concerned.

It seems he was coming across a cornfield with some other soldiers when he suddenly felt a sharp pain behind his right knee. At first he thought it was a bee and he said to himself, "This is peculiar." He kept right on walking through the cornfield but the pain didn't start to ease up the way it would in the case of a bee's sting. In fact, Uncle Ned finally said to himself, "That wasn't any bee." He looked down and saw that he had been wounded, and so he turned around and walked back to a field hospital.

If it had been a better hospital Uncle Ned would not have limped all the days of his life. But at any rate that was all he saw of the war and after the first few times the story more or less lost its tang. You knew how it was going to come out. In fact, I got to wishing that it had been a bee so that there wouldn't be any story.

Without wishing to generalize I think that veterans and veterans' organizations are inclined to make one battle cover too much territory. For instance, Uncle Ned and my Aunt Harriet had quite a verbal exchange one night because Ned said that the music of "Floradora" was old-fashioned. My aunt played the piano and Uncle Ned was not acquainted with any musical instrument. But he was pretty dogmatic about a lot of things. All on account of the Second Battle of Bull Run.

He thought that Admiral Sampson didn't deserve a nickel's worth of credit for the Battle of Santiago. But he didn't want to make a hero of Schley either because he declared it was generally known that no Spaniard had any notion of how to shoot. Uncle Ned said that he wouldn't give you a nickel for any kind of bottled beer. He also said that young Mr. Hearst, who had just begun to publish in New York, had forgotten more about newspapers than Joseph Pulitzer ever knew. In other words, Uncle Ned had an opinion on a great many different things and he was very sure about his opinions. The fact that he was wholly uninformed on the subject in hand never stopped him any more than the Confederate rifle fire stopped the Union forces at the Second Battle of Bull Run.

The bullet wound back of the knee gave the old gentleman a sense of authority. It hurt him quite a lot in damp weather, and whenever he felt a twinge he cursed out somebody. Now when you get millions of men with twinges, either psychological or psychic, you have a vast army a little too ready to condemn those things with which they are not very well acquainted. It is reasonable enough that ex-soldiers should want adjusted compensation. I don't mean that they are always entitled to it, but at least they are talking about a thing they know. When they get to free speech and civil liberties and the subjects that should be taught in the schools they are way out of their deep dugouts. They haven't any opinion.

That is the great danger of the veterans' movement in politics and in social affairs. The men concerned are too accustomed to taking orders. "Theirs not to reason why," has been too much impressed upon them. Anybody with a loud voice who happens remotely to suggest a major general can get the whole kit and caboodle to fall into line with a single word of command. The veteran, as a rule, is so much tied up with the past that he has small interest in the future. He can be enlisted in reactionary blocs simply because he is over given to reminiscences. His battles are behind him.

Accordingly, I am vastly interested in the formation of a new veterans' group which is being planned. This organization may well be much larger than any now in existence, and it will be by its very nature a forward-looking group. I refer, of course, to the proposed Veterans of Future Wars. These men will be alert in their study of current problems from the fact that their very existence is bound up in the march of things to come. I feel certain that Uncle Ned would have been a much more interesting Sunday dinner guest before the Second Battle of Bull Run.

As to the Veterans of Future Wars, the admission test should be exceedingly elastic. No one may fairly be barred on account of youth, since Germany and Italy have already shown that preparation for war may start in the cradle or thereabouts. Nor should senescence be a barrier either, since no one knows just what material may be required in the front lines of the future, and even the doddering old gentleman who cannot possibly shoulder a gun should not lightly be rejected as a member of the Veterans of Future Wars, for no one knows but that he may still do his bit as a cabinet minister.

Indeed, if the organization is properly recruited and organized, it should be able to hold a monster convention. And at this meeting the Veterans of Future Wars might well set an example worthy of emulation by the American Legion. They could vote unanimously to disband.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

THE ARTIST AND THE ICE AGE

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

TWO weeks ago I quoted here, and with no little glee, certain remarks which Stephen Spender had recently made about freedom and art. The glee remains and so, for that matter, does the general conviction that art and life are both served best when the artist is allowed to go his frequently perverse way in order that he may come, as he often does, upon truths less likely to be discovered by the most diligent and disciplined of the official seekers. In other words, it still seems to me, as apparently it did to Mr. Spender, that in any society the artist is the best as well as the safest exponent of those critical, protestant, and heretical tendencies which help to assure its health.

Candor compels me to admit, nevertheless, certain reservations with respect to one of Mr. Spender's phrases which I quoted with apparent approval. "Unless," he wrote, "artists insist upon their right to criticize, to be human and even humanitarian, communism will become a frozen era, another ice age." This is a fine rhetorical statement. It has oratorical value, and its ominous sound might conceivably strike a salutary terror into certain hearts. But it does less than justice to the toughness and persistence of the artistic and the heretical impulses. It assumes that both would be more easily put down than either have ever been in the past; that the artist will actually conform because he is told that he must.

Certainly he has been told that often enough in times gone by, and as a matter of fact there have been very few societies which in theory granted him the freedom that both Mr. Spender and I believe to be highly desirable. Nevertheless, he has very often and pretty persistently taken for himself what he was not freely accorded. The heretical artist has, in other words, most frequently done his work not because censorships did not exist but because he either defied or eluded them. Sometimes he is bold and sometimes he is sly. By being bold he has often achieved the most ringing utterance. By being sly he has no less frequently achieved the most ingenious satire.

Let us take an example in which the heresy is so old that the prohibition against it has been almost forgotten. Offhand I should probably be inclined to assert that the historian cannot write well unless he is free to say what he really means. Yet the most admired, the most often read, and from the artistic standpoint the very finest part of Gibbon's history is comprised in those famous fifteenth and sixteenth chapters where he was compelled by the law against blasphemy to hint and imply what he dared not say. Nor is it by any means merely that he managed despite the law to convey what he wished to convey. The point is that he conveyed it much more entertainingly and beautifully than he would ever have done had he enjoyed complete freedom. The brilliance of the irony is a direct result of the limitations under which he worked, and had it not been for those limitations, there would have been no occasion for the subtlety and the wit which alone make the chapters still delightful in an age to which the thesis is no longer particularly interesting. It is, in other words, to the legal obstacles which were put in Gibbon's way that we owe one of the greatest masterpieces of irony in the English language. Nor is it by any means certain that parallel phenomena are not being produced at this very moment. Who can say, to take a more recent example, that "The Little Golden Calf" would ever have been written if direct criticism of certain aspects of Russian life had not been at the time distinctly unhealthy? During a period, at least, the Russian authorities, taking a second thought, did forbid the publication of the work. But it had already appeared serially, and it would probably never have appeared at all had the authors not received that stimulus to ingenuity which a censorship often affords.

No one is ready, I hope, to draw from all this any conclusions more paradoxical than those I intend. I am not, for example, urging that any state desirous of encouraging the arts should establish prohibitions for the purpose of promoting wit. But I am insisting that wit, like other expressions of the spirit of dissent, is not easily silenced and that the saving remnant has a way of persisting in even the most thoroughly "coordinated" of totalitarian societies. Nothing could have been more authoritarian in spirit than the medieval university, but the songs the students sung have survived to testify that they found a place in their hearts for impulses and interests which were not officially encouraged.

But perhaps I am doing less than justice to Mr. Spender himself. He did not say, "Unless communism grants their right to criticize, to be human, and even humanitarian." He said instead, "Unless artists insist on their right," and so on. The difference is vast and implies the whole argument, since the danger, if danger there is, lies less in the discipline which a party wishes to impose than in the willingness of the artist to accept it. So long as he has the will to freedom, so long as he refuses himself to consent to a dictatorship from without, he is still capable of playing his role as artist. But if the time ever comes when all artists are willing, as some now apparently are, to submit inwardly to dictation and thus to surrender their right to explore and innovate, then the new "ice age" may indeed be imminent.

Not long ago an ardent Communist critic told me with what seemed an almost masochistic delight how the

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steam-roller had been run over him at a certain writers' conference when he had dared to express views deviating ever so slightly from the "party line." He was, if I understood him aright, glad to be flattened out because of the assurance which the flattening gave him that strong and ruthless men were in control of the party to which he belonged. To me it seems clear that he had somehow maneuvered himself into the position desperately achieved by Jonathan Edwards, who proclaimed his willingness to be damned for the glory of God. And that, I think, is more than ought to be required of any man.

BOOKS

Cross-Section

AMERICAN POINTS OF VIEW. A READER'S GUIDE, 1935. Edited by William H. Cordell and Kathryn Coe Cordell. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

THE editors of this collection of American essays of 1935 have used the "point of view" as their criterion of selection, and the volume as a whole aims to give a cross-section of American attitudes, prejudices, sentiments so far as these are reflected by intellectuals, public men, and men of letters. From this standpoint the collection is admirable. All of these forty essays, more or less, are significant and stimulating, and taken as a group they give a vivid picture of the great variety of feelings that are stirring in our widely scattered and intellectually very diversified population. Communism, I take it, is not only rampant but almost respectable—far more respectable than the innocent liberal socialism of two decades ago ever was in its time. (Earl Browder, "Who Are the Americans?" "Only the Russians," says Browder.) Liberalism too is fighting the Fascist-Communist attack much more vigorously among the intellectuals who write than among those who do not write. Our Jews have gone American. Ten years ago we were, in their eyes, the scum of the earth. Now Ludwig Lewisohn ("An American Comes Home") all but smothers us in soft soap. (Others are feeling the same way about us now. Count Sforza: "America is the one place where an honest man can breathe today.") Many of us are still worrying about the machine age (if only they would stop worrying long enough to read Pareto's Chapter XIII). The educational grouch is as grouchy as ever (Croswell Bowen, "I Was a Rich Man's Son"), and as bewildered as ever (two opposite trends —one toward a revival of old-fashioned discipline, another toward the training-school, employment-agency idea). Pacifism, rugged individualism, lower middle-class moralism (Charles Beard, of all things!!!) all have their say. I note a few absentees. Characteristic of 1935, I should say, would be an intensification of the regionalist spirit in our South. It is merely impolite, at present. Away in the offing it dreams of the *revanche*. As a matter of record one might have made room for it. So the Catholic neo-Thomists were perhaps entitled to a page or two, to say nothing of American Protestantism. Indeed, if one is to include in such a collection the "I Was Marching" of Meridel Le Sueur, that effusion should have been balanced by a good racy Salvation Army sermon, which would have been at once more representative, more intelligent, and certainly more grammatical. And why not some expressions of a plain ordinary American spirit—some essay of Bernard De Voto, at a hazard?

Moments

Havelock Ellis Introduces Sex to the English Public

This volume is also accompanied by some prize awards by Burton Rascoe, Erskine Caldwell, and J. G. Fletcher. These awards are incomprehensible except on the basis of some mystical or rankly impressionistic criterion known only to the judges. An essay, or even an "article," involves a subject matter. Almost inevitably it involves more or less of theory. Finally would come form, manner of writing, force, and perhaps utility or purpose. A good essay would, it seems to me, be an essay that is sound from all those points of view. By merest chance, it would seem, J. W. Krutch's "Was Europe a Success?" managed to get a third or fourth prize, when it was surely entitled to first place. I have no objection to the honor paid to Mr. Pfeiffer's "Why Liberalism Is Bankrupt," though to my mind the problem is erroneously stated in that article and the answer (or answers) is inconclusive. But how can anyone in his right mind prefer Mr. Hemingway's pretentiously ignorant and irresponsible chatter on international politics ("Notes on the Next War") to, let us say, such a charming and brilliant essay as Mr. Nock's "Thoughts on Utopia"? Or was it that the judges merely forgot to state that their first prize was a booby prize?

Taken all in all, the American essay, however interesting and stimulating, would seem from this collection to remain still a fairly crude affair. Our basic defect, as I take it, is the tyranny of the "lead" or "angle" under which virtually all our authors are compelled to work. No matter how serious a

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writer's thought may be, he has to develop it around some smart phrase in order to catch an editor's eye in the first instance and a reader's eye in the second. Then our public is grossly immature on the side of theory, if it cares anything about theory at all. Theory remains, for most of our writers, merely a device for organizing material. One never considers whether the theory be sound or false, old or new, absolute or relative. Hardly an essay in this whole collection pays any attention to the history of the question with which it deals. We are probably more self-conscious on the side of form and style, and one notes in these essays a number of historical lineages ranging all the way from the somewhat affected Anglican urbanity of Mr. Nock to the vulgar tabloid preciosity of Mr. Hemingway. But according to the tabloid judges who functioned in this competition, the tabloids have it.

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

A Modern Major General

THE GENERAL. By C. S. Forester. Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

HERBERT CURZON, in Mr. Forester's novel, is anything but the pattern of a modern major general, and far from pretending to a knowledge of fugues and paradoxes, Raphael and Aristophanes, would indignantly deny that he had any. Which may well account for the fact that by page 237 he has become a lieutenant general, with "Sir" in front of his name. There was no nonsense about Curzon; he was a soldier who gave and took orders with the same undivided mind, and who passed up all cosmic conjecture in seeing to it that the line held firm. And hold firm it did, always, though every last man in it might be blown to bits. It was by such straight thinking that the obscure cavalry major of 1914 became, within three years, one of the leading generals in the British army, with decorations on his uniform three rows deep.

The portrait of Curzon is not the less terrifying because it is pat. There is nothing villainous about this Sandhurst prig swearing by that code that has made half the Englishmen of the past fifty years a subhuman species; there is only something monstrous. The race has simply sucked the individual dry; the brain has simply evacuated in favor of a few reflex actions. At moments one proffers an admiration as glacial as the man one admires, aware that even the snob, the brute, the careerist in Curzon are effortlessly subordinated to the Englishman who does his duty as he sees it. Here is, indeed, a not uncommon type of hero—the man who knows how to die magnificently, and does not in the least know how to live.

Forester has drawn Curzon monotonously to type, has drawn him almost to the point of caricature; yet it is absurd to cavil, since for all that he has drawn him scathingly enough to make one's blood boil. And he has done more; by means of this one man he has contrived to show us all the horror and imbecility of war. In a way, Curzon's perfect military manners are more damning than chapters of mental horror and physical agony would be, for they demand moral evaluation instantly. And they will instantly bring about a schism dividing humanity in half. There will be those to whom Curzon seems like a savior, and those to whom he seems like a devil; nobody will see him as anything that lies between the two.

And for that very reason this book cannot accomplish its purpose in the way that "All Quiet" and "Sergeant Grischa"

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Productive Capital the Goat

Productive Capital, then, is overloaded with taxation and compelled to pay billions for the rental or purchase of ground; while at the same time further tax burdens are proposed by Townsendites, Bonusites, and Share-the-wealthites. Moreover, to cap the climax, the Marxites mistakenly identify productive capital as the central villain of the economic tragedy, and advocate its total confiscation. More and more people are studying the logic of the American economic situation in—

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may be supposed to have accomplished their purpose. Palpable as is the motion of "The General," with its mass of tractarian writing, one will find it, depending on who one is, either too obvious or too obscure. The reader who believes in patriotism and "discipline" and consequently in war will nowhere be sentimentally disconcerted, as he must have been by "All Quiet," in reading this dry book; if he sees things by Curzon's lights he will continue to see them so at the end of the story, and will continue to regard Curzon as unexceptionable. For what is on trial here is not men who sin against the code and can be roundly berated as villains, but a code that sins against men; and it so happens that this is the very code which most people on this earth subscribe to. Behind it, moreover, stand two thousand years of the world's best literature: Horace with "Dulce et decorum est," Tennyson with "Theirs not to reason why," Lovelace with "Loved I not honor more," Shakespeare with "This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England." What chance has Mr. Forester against Shakespeare? We shall know better six months from now, if we take the trouble to ask Little, Brown and Company for figures on the sale of his book.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

How Social and How Secure?

SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES. By Paul H. Douglas. Whittlesey House. $3.

TOWARD SOCIAL SECURITY. By Eveline M. Burns. Whittlesey House. $2.

DEFENDERS of the present Social Security Act will derive little comfort from the two volumes listed above. The Administration spokesman who proudly boasted not so long ago that "in two years the United States worked out a system of job insurance that it took Europe fifteen years to accomplish" will find little approval of that handiwork. Both authors vigorously indict the chief provisions of the act, though neither can resist the pragmatic urge to extend their blessing to it. Professor Douglas consoles himself with the fact that "the American public has finally realized that it needs the greater protection against unemployment and old age which pooled social insurance gives." Professor Burns also, while regretting that "a great opportunity was missed for passing a more socially satisfactory" plan, believes nevertheless that "the act is a great achievement."

Professor Douglas presents a masterly summary of the background of the movement, the demands from the right and the left, and describes the manner in which the bill was passed. His chapter on the legislative history of the act will be of interest not only to those concerned with this particular problem but also to those interested in any New Deal legislation. Professor Douglas informs us that the bill as first introduced, prepared by the legal staff of the Department of Labor, embodied "little or no logic in the sequence of the topics covered," while "some of the language was ambiguous and, indeed, in places unintelligible." He gives an intimate account of the jockeying for the authority to administer the new act and an interesting résumé of the committee hearings and the difficulties encountered in the attempt to draft a more constructive program. He does not hesitate to delineate the role played by the Wisconsin school, which "occupied some powerful positions of vantage in the Washington scene," and served to cripple the unemployment-insurance features.

Professor Douglas devotes several chapters to an analysis of the provisions of the act. He gives an excellent description of the grants-in-aid schemes and indicates how these can be improved. He denounces the incorporation of the tax-offset scheme for unemployment insurance in place of the subsidy device recommended by the majority of the Advisory Council and all authoritative students of the problem. He criticizes the act's grant of autonomy to the states to enact individual reserve systems and employment-guaranty plans which cannot guarantee "the quality of benefits to the unemployed within any given state."

The accumulation of the contemplated reserves under the old-age insurance plan, Professor Douglas finds, "will beyond doubt greatly decrease the amount of purchasing power which otherwise would be spent upon consumers' goods." The withdrawal of such huge amounts from consumption, he points out further, "may well help to create a further state of unbalance in the future." He stresses the difficulties inhering in the present requirement that annuitants must leave gainful employment in order to qualify for their meager pensions. An entire chapter is devoted to the problems connected with the Clark amendment, which seeks to exempt private industrial old-age pension schemes from the compulsory insurance plan.

The reviewer has never seen a finer analysis of the constitutional problems involved in social-security legislation than that made by Professor Douglas. It sheds more light on the problem than most of the briefs devised by eminent legal authorities. A few years ago Professor Douglas published an exceptionally fine book under the title "Standards of Unemployment Insurance," in which he brought out the basic considerations underlying a practicable plan of unemployment insurance. That the framers of the Social Security Act did not pay the slightest attention to them has not daunted the courage of this indefatigable fighter for social justice. He emphasizes his points again in his present work. Despite the difficulty of the problem treated, no reader will find it either difficult to grasp or without genuine profit. The author has accomplished a masterly task.

Professor Burns's artillery is directed at the problems raised by the passage of the act. She is somewhat critical of the grants-in-aid provisions because of their inadequacy. This, however, is not an indelible defect since there is nothing in the provisions to prevent their future liberalization and improvement, which will undoubtedly come.

In discussing the compulsory old-age insurance system Professor Burns finds that the plan "is really a compulsory savings plan with insurance features for those who live long enough." The act, she points out, "places upon the shoulders of workers who are now young the burden arising from our failure to set up an annuity plan many years ago, instead of calling upon those who are better able to pay to share the cost." The author aptly asks: "If it is a good plan to ask the young or higher-paid wage-earners to pay for the unearned annuities of their old or lower-paid fellow-workers, why not extend the principle farther? Why draw the line at incomes of $3,000?"

Like Professor Douglas, Dr. Burns is most critical of the unemployment-insurance scheme adopted. Dwelling on the vulnerability of the present tax-offset scheme with its great administrative difficulties, the burden which it places upon employers in filing duplicating taxes, and the fact that complete protection of the rights of workers would require 1,222 voluntary agreements between the states, she too points her finger at the Wisconsin influence. According to Professor

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Burns, "it is an open secret that the less effective tax offset was favored in some quarters just because it obstructed federal efforts to secure uniform minimum standards. Those who treasure the rights of their states to experiment with devices for stabilizing employment were unwilling that the federal government should set standards which might prevent them from trying certain methods." Wisconsin was the only state so concerned.

The difficulties involved in the present unemployment-insurance provisions are splendidly brought out by Dr. Burns. Under the act, before unemployment protection can be obtained in the various states, pressure must be applied to thousands of employers instead of to the state legislature. The duplication of legislation in Congress and the states will hinder improvements and amendments. The lack of standards will create a miscellany of state laws without regard to the fundamental needs of the unemployed. Although the act requires that no state pay unemployment benefits for two years after it enacts a law, it fails to stipulate when a state must begin to pay such benefits. Under these provisions, the author points out, "a state might, if it wished, save up money year by year to pay benefits during the next ice age." Dr. Burns, as well as Professor Douglas, attacks the principle of individual reserves and the guaranty plans. "The mountainous labors of the Committee on Economic Security and of Congress," she concludes, "have produced a disappointingly small mouse." She joins with Professor Douglas in pleading for the substitution of the "more convenient and constitutional grant-in-aid method" for the "clumsy and roundabout tax-offset method."

Dr. Burns effectively punctures one of the most common misconceptions of social insurance held by many advocates of the subject, namely, the idea that social security can be accomplished through self-sustaining social insurance. This, she states, is not only impossible of accomplishment, but based upon the assumption that "the poor should be compelled to pay most of the cost of helping the poor." She also raises one of the most crucial questions now confronting social-insurance protagonists. Stating correctly that the Supreme Court is generally inclined to go along with public demand if it is vigorous enough, she emphasizes the fact that in the fight for social security there must be not only strong public support but also "something worth-while to fight for." But under the unwieldy and unnecessarily burdensome provisions which hedge the present act, "no one is likely to fight to preserve it." The act has been so written that "the American people will become aware of it first of all as taxpayers, since no benefits of any kind will be paid for at least two years after the taxes fall due." During this period "there will be thousands of angry taxpayers attacking the act and few to defend it because no one will receive any tangible benefits." Pointing out that only a program of social security which can commend itself to the masses of the community as being "just and fair and which disturbs the smooth running of the economic order as little as possible" can possibly arouse such support, she finds that the present act "hardly deserves its name." This, she says, explains why many of the enthusiastic promoters of the subject are fearful "lest the whole security program break down beneath the weight of its administrative machinery."

Dr. Burns's book raises extremely pertinent questions regarding the Social Security Act, questions which the Administration cannot afford to ignore. Indeed, no one interested in social security in America should fail to read it. The problem still lies before us.

ABRAHAM EPSTEIN

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War and Profits

M-DAY, The First Day of War. By Rose M. Stein. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

MISS STEIN, according to her publishers, was "closely associated" with the Nye committee and prepared for it "an official summary of the testimony"; she acknowledges the aid and criticism of its counsel, Mr. Raushenbush, in the writing of this book, and makes extensive use not only of the committee hearings but of information which it did not place on public record. This will inevitably give to "M-Day" the character of at least a quasi-authorized popular distillation of the committee's work, and I am very much afraid that it is not going to do the Nye committee much good. For Miss Stein does not confine herself to what the committee proved, or even to what it attempted to prove. She sets out to roam the whole vast field of war in modern society, rationalizing our entry into the last war, the course of our war effort, the post-war activities of munitions makers, and the industrial and human mobilization plans now being stored up against the next one, all in the harsh, black-and-white terms of a greedy "capital" and a cheated and oppressed "labor" or "the public."

This is an enormous task, to be performed successfully only by one with a powerful historical imagination, a convincing exactitude in factual detail, and a clear basic philosophy of society. Miss Stein can scarcely be blamed for lacking these rare qualities, but in their absence her book becomes a rather confused hodge-podge, uncertain in its demonstrations and pointless in the end. She opens with a somewhat extreme statement of the thesis that the bankers got us into the war. "To save their own skins American bankers had to promote Allied victory. If that achievement required American participation in the war, then that was the next logical step." Our great industrial mobilization was primarily dictated by industrialists thirsting for profits; the draft act was passed not to provide men for a large-scale participation on the western front but to prevent "labor difficulties" within the machine supplying goods to the Allies; America, having been got into a war in which it had no interest, was kept in it (and this, I confess, seems to me a really extraordinary theory) by proclaiming "a crusade to crush bolshevism." The author then goes on to rehearse the sins of the munitions makers as they have been emphasized in the Nye hearings; she describes the proposed draft and propaganda acts which have been prepared for submission to Congress in the next "emergency," ultimately losing herself happily in the host of contradictions which have been created by the violent disparity between the necessities of modern war and the political and social rationalizations which Western democratic society continues to profess.

In the course of all this, Miss Stein makes more than one useful point. There is an interesting demonstration to show that "taking the profit out of war" is an idle dream; and it is a service to call attention to the fact that in addition to the problem of why the United States declared war on Germany there is the different problem of how what many imagined would be a mere financial contribution to victory was converted into a full-scale military participation on the western front. But the trouble with Miss Stein's solution for this, as for the many other problems with which she deals, is her heavy reliance, in common with other narrow economic determinists, upon inference, innuendo, and *post hoc propter hoc* argument. Some of the inferences I suspect are shrewd; others seem to me fantastic; and when this method is coupled with a lamentable carelessness in matters of chronology and detail—as a random example, at one point she puts in Mr. Baker's mouth the words of his biographer, and gives an unwarranted twist to the result by associating it with events happening months after the time referred to—she lays herself open to attack which can be devastating. It is to be feared that the book will damage rather than strengthen the real influence of the Nye committee's work.

WALTER MILLIS

The Townsend Fantasy

AGE BEFORE BOOTY. By Morgan J. Dorman. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $1.

THE TOWNSEND PLAN. By Nicholas Roosevelt. Doubleday, Doran and Company. 50 cents.

THE ECONOMIC MEANING OF THE TOWNSEND PLAN. By a University of Chicago Round Table, Harry D. Gideonse, Editor. University of Chicago Press. 25 cents.

THREE more different treatments of the same subject would be difficult to imagine than those contained in the booklets listed above on America's most popular controversial subject—the Townsend plan. The first is essentially an evangelical appeal. Objections are mentioned merely to ridicule the objectors. For example, the very pertinent criticism that the plan, if adopted, would require approximately 40 per cent of the national income is noted. But each time this objection is phrased, the author patiently points out that the pensions would be *revolving*, that the new purchasing power created by the payments would "suck up the stagnant pools of the nation's congealed life blood and whirl them along through a constantly functioning system." He does not attempt, however, to explain how the withdrawal of all persons over sixty years of age from productive activity would increase the supply of goods to meet this vastly expanded demand. Nor does he devote any attention to the effect of the decline in the purchasing power of the 90 per cent of the population which will bear the tax burden.

Mr. Roosevelt attempts to meet the Townsend cohorts on their own ground. He appears to be sympathetic with the motives which led to the development of the plan, is almost sentimental toward Dr. Townsend personally, but is bitterly vindictive in his attack on the movement. Although he is somewhat sounder in his economics, his picture of the effect of the plan is in many ways as distorted as that presented by Mr. Dorman. Instead of its ushering in a golden era in American economic life, Mr. Roosevelt declares that the Townsend plan would cripple business, close factories, intensify unemployment, and be the signal for the gravest nation-wide disaster we have experienced in the 147 years of our national existence. Mr. Roosevelt's very obvious predilection for laissez faire economics, however, tends to make his argument unconvincing to the millions of Americans who feel, rightly or wrongly, that some positive measures should be taken to stimulate the full use of America's immense productive resources.

The University of Chicago pamphlet is as balanced and objective as the others are extreme. While its economic analysis naturally bears some resemblance to that contained in Mr. Roosevelt's book, it predicts no great catastrophe for this country if the plan is adopted. On the contrary, it points out that the transactions tax proposed by the Townsend proponents, while large enough to be a crushing burden on the masses of the American people, "would scarcely yield enough to pay $75 per month to 7,000,000—much

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less $200 to 10,000,000 persons." It adds also a word of caution regarding the complicated mechanism which would be required to collect the transactions tax and supervise the lives of the pensioners lest one of them fail to spend his entire allotment within thirty days. Although tons of material have been written on the supposed beneficial or disastrous effect of the Townsend plan, this little pamphlet is, I believe, the only comprehensive economic analysis thus far to be presented. The plan's political implications still remain to be dealt with in as objective a manner.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

A Novel of Quality

THE HOUSE IN PARIS. By Elizabeth Bowen. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THIS is a puzzling book. Other reviewers have called it subtle, luminous, miraculous, exciting. Undoubtedly it is distinguished. The style is clear, pure, and exact. The characters—not much more than half a dozen in all—are sharp and various. Undoubtedly also they suffer. But these qualities, admirable as they are, do not quite add up to the moving story that they ought to.

The first and third parts of the book are laid in the present; the second part is in the past. Thus to the reader—as to the protagonist of the first part, a nine-year-old boy who is ignorant of his parentage—the first third of the book is veiled and mysterious. Leopold has come to Paris from his home in Italy to meet the mother he has never known. He knows that his father is dead and his mother is married to an Englishman; he knows that the Fishers, mother and daughter, in whose house he waits with anguished eagerness for the meeting, were friends of his mother. His American foster-parents he despises. For him the only reality is his mother, whom he has endowed with all possible beauty and virtue. And she does not come.

By a cut-back in the second part, the reader is made acquainted with what Leopold will never learn—the brief unhappy love affair from which he was born. Karen is a gently bred English girl; Max is a Jew without fortune; each is engaged to another person, Max to the Naomi Fisher whom Leopold knows as his mother's friend. The passionate feeling which brings Max and Karen together for so short a time leaves Naomi high and dry, for Max, unable to resolve the situation, commits suicide; and Karen, after her baby is born, marries the man to whom she was promised.

This, it will be seen, is easily the stuff of which novels are made. Passion, frustration, grief, despair all have their place. Yet there are curious elipses. The reader knows Max only as Karen's lover—and as a man subject to the powerful and evil Mme. Fisher, Naomi's mother, who really drives him to kill himself. Karen appears only in her brief relation to Max and to Max and Naomi together, and indirectly later to her husband, whom she does not love but whose generosity and forgiveness separate her psychologically from her child. Leopold could never know his father as his mother's lover; but he is no more in the dark than is the reader about what sort of man Max was. Each of the characters, in short, appears under a cloud, incomplete, muted. And this is perhaps the key to Miss Bowen's failure to make her book what it might have been. In the great and successful novels passion is expressed, everything is said somewhere and somehow, the reader feels a reassuring omniscience which unites him with the author, also omniscient. Whatever secrets the characters may have from one another are not secrets to the reader. The result is a sense of completeness

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which Miss Bowen does not impart. Her people are cleverly contrived puppets moving through episodes expressive of emotion—but the emotion is not quite real. This Max and this Karen, even Leopold, the clever, desperate, over-wise child, have hearts but they do not beat, blood but it does not flow. This is not life, and neither by a strange paradox is it art.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Shorter Notices

ARTIFEX. By Richard Aldington. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Mr. Aldington calls the short pieces which compose this volume articles and not essays, "because the essay is only an article in a high hat"; others will prefer to call them sketches and not articles because the article is only a sketch in a crushed fedora. The result, at any rate, is a singularly indolent procession of "thoughts" on the subject of life, love, and the amenities of travel by sea. Characteristic of his tone in general is such a remark as, "Now, in my opinion, few human spectacles are so charming as two young people downright crazily in love with each other." Yet Mr. Aldington would not be disposed to contemplate with a like approval the Human Spectacle as such. "They seem to me like ants," he observes in a mood of "soul-crushing boredom," "but terribly noisy, destructive, and assertive ants; and the worst of it is they *can't* leave one alone." The most inclusive definition of them all is laid down solemnly in a piece on freedom of the press. "Music is music," we are here advised, "not noise; painting is painting, not poster-work or abstraction; sculpture is sculpture, not rock-drilling; architecture is architecture, not engineering; literature is literature, not writing ads; poetry is poetry, not word mosaics. . . . I want music, painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, poetry." Unfortunately Mr. Aldington wants also, as far as the present sketches go, a capacity for ordinary pains in the exercise of his craft and a critical arsenal of sufficient force to achieve something more than a purely petulant effect in the expression of his private grievances. However, counsel of this kind is very probably idly bestowed, since it seems to be another of Mr. Aldington's beliefs, urged somewhere among the present papers, that "no intelligent person pays the least attention to what reviewers say."

JESUS MANIFEST By Dmitri Merejkowski. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

For the second time the Russian poet and mystic, well-known for his life of Leonardo da Vinci, has sought to follow Papini, Middleton Murry, and other men of letters in attempting a life of Christ. His first book projected a mystic's vision of the Christ of faith. It earned and merited the praise of many critics. The second effort is less happy. A poetic embellishment of the simple gospel narratives is a difficult task at best. Merejkowski does not solve the difficulty. Sometimes his elaborations are distractions beside the quite sufficient though austerely simple narratives. Sometimes he strains too obviously for effect. Thus the kiss of Judas prompts the observation, "The fetid breath of the unclean spirit is in the kiss of love—such was the last goodby of man to the Son of God." The trial before the high priest is introduced with the words, "The heart of a spider experiences a pleasant thrill at the first buzz of a fly in its web. So also did a thrill of pleasure pass through the heart of the high priest Annas." There are naturally some genuinely beautiful and moving passages. But on the whole

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the simple fare of the King James version is preferable to this kind of raisin bread. The raisins are too thick, and they make the bread taste prematurely stale.

EPITAPH ON GEORGE MOORE. By Charles Morgan. The Macmillan Company. $1.25.

The noisy publicity which stimulated the sales of "The Fountain" formed an ironic background to the sensitive, reticent character of Mr. Morgan's protagonist, the scholarly Lewis Alinson. This monograph on George Moore is precisely the kind of book Alinson might have written as an ultimate protest against vulgarity. It is distinguished by an imperturbable poise, a self-conscious reluctance to confuse literary values with journalistic chatter. During the last years of Moore's life Mr. Morgan was his close companion. Since their conversations indicate that both men were interested in life primarily as material for art, it is not surprising to find Mr. Morgan approaching Moore's life through his art rather than assuming, with the biographical critics, that art is comprehensible only as the reflection of a socially conditioned individual. Moore's "passion for self-renewal," which is here considered as the essence of his nature, seems to have its origin in artistic experience; what is implicit in his work is only secondarily suggested in his personal life. Just as he taught himself to write all over again in every book, so he taught himself to redraft his life in every stage of its growth. He would break as callously with an old friend as with an old habit of style. This artistic passion for recapitulation and rebirth explains the autobiographical nature of so many of Moore's works: "Confessions of a Young Man," "Memoirs of My Dead Life," "Hail and Farewell," and others. It explains, too, Moore's preoccupation with technique, the endless rediscovery of sensibility. The result of this continual self-creation, according to Mr. Morgan, was that Moore gave to English fiction a combination of unity and lucidity, based on a reconciliation of written and spoken language, which previous novels had achieved only haphazardly. Moore gave "liberty as well as discipline to the English novel." On the basis of his insight into the relation between style and the psychology of the artist, Mr. Morgan examines Moore's achievement in fiction from "Esther Waters" through "The Brook Kerith" to "Héloise and Abélard." In view of his sympathetic appreciation of Moore as well as his critical understanding of the problems of the modern novel, it seems unfortunate that he was forced by circumstances beyond his control to abandon the task of a full biography, a task which Moore himself had assigned to his young friend.

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A VERY pedestrian version of "An American Tragedy" flourished briefly on Broadway a few years ago. Like many dramatizations it was hardly more than a hurried synopsis, and it seemed, beside the novel, an impoverished thing. Obviously one cannot simply skeletonize a work of this kind without losing the rich profusion of realistic detail upon which its effect depends, and the least one can say of "The Case of Clyde Griffiths" (Ethel Barrymore Theater) is just that it does attempt in various ways to achieve some sort of intensity

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calculated to compensate for the solidity which the dramatic form must sacrifice. Unfortunately, however, the least that one can say is also very nearly the most, for "The Case of Clyde Griffiths" is simplified into a mere exemplary fable and then delivered in a falsetto which soon ceases to be more than exasperatingly shrill.

The version is a translation of that made some time ago for Piscator's "advanced" theater in Berlin, and the Group has staged it more or less in accordance with Piscator's methods. There is a permanent set with two levels, upon which, with a minimum of properties, the company performs the scenes in a fashion halfway between realism and a sort of stylized make-believe. The more familiar the method becomes the less there is to recommend it, but the real reason for the relative ineffectiveness of the play lies less in the staging than in the obvious determination to simplify the whole story in the interests of a puerile didacticism. After all, Dreiser's novel was impressive for two reasons: first, because the naturalistic documentation gave it a kind of factual authenticity which one could not dismiss; second, because one was made to feel the complexity of the forces which were driving Clyde to his fate, made to realize how the weakness of his character conspired with the cruelness of the dilemma in which he found himself to make that fate almost inevitable. But with the fanaticism of the moralist the adaptors have first stripped the novel of its factual realism and then schematized its moral until the intellect rebels against so child-like a simplification.

In it they have seen nothing except the lesson, and in their determination to leave no point unglossed they have supplied a redundancy of comment which begins by seeming an insult to the intelligence and ends, as over-explicitness usually does, by arousing all one's impulses to dissent. When the omnipresent commentator emerges from the obscurity of the orchestra pit to remark of the heroine, "For her, love is only a dream as yet unrealized," one feels merely that this yellow-backed language is hardly beautiful enough in itself to justify the intrusion of an unnecessary comment. When at the climax he emerges again to assure us that what we might be inclined to call fate has now been unmasked as "economic law," one is moved perversely to reflect that since all twenty-five-dollar-a-week clerks who yearn for a more resplendent life do not commit murder, there is obviously some factor of which the "law" has not given a wholly satisfactory account.

In a sense, Dreiser's novel was a protest against a somewhat similar simplication from an opposite point of view. He was never unaware that the conventional moralist would say that Clyde met his fate because he was a weak and wicked man. The whole point of the novel lay not only in presenting the hero as an object of pity but also in the clear indication that he was sinned against as well as sinning. It was convincing because it illustrated so clearly how a combination of forces are necessary before a thing so apparently incredible can actually take place. But to say that Clyde had to commit murder because his salary did not enable him to pay for his dress suit is hardly less inadequate than to say that he did so because the grace of God was not in him. Surely there is no society in which this particular callous weakling would have become a very noble specimen of the human race. It is even probable enough that he would have got into some sort of trouble in the best-regulated of worlds. All that can be said—all that Mr. Dreiser did say—was merely that the particular form which his downfall took was a form to the shaping of which economic injustice contributed its share. But to see in his story nothing more than an illustration of such economic injustice is to make it little more convincing than to see in it no more than a moral warn-

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ing to apprentices who ought to be industrious and who ought to respect their masters.

Even the authors of this play wobble badly in their interpretation after they have stated the thesis in uncompromising terms. Obviously the story they have to tell is one from which the factor of moral weakness as well as of mere fecklessness cannot wholly be banished. They cannot make Clyde *merely* a victim, and so, from the orchestra pit, they admonish him for his sins and then, slightly shifting the point of view, reproach him as an enemy of his class who should have joined the other workers in a strike (non-existent in the novel and invented for the purpose) instead of accepting invitations from the boss or his friends. Unfortunately, however, these attempts to hedge appear rather as inconsistencies than as realistic representations of the complexity of life, and the fact will, indeed, serve very well to illustrate the weakness of the didactic method in works of the imagination. Dreiser could make dubiety and complexity contribute to the impressive realism of his work. The very impossibility of disentangling all the motives, of measuring the importance of all the factors, made his account seem real. It created the illusion of life because, like life, the story was not reducible to a geometrical demonstration. But a demonstration, on the other hand, must demonstrate conclusively or it is nothing, and until life can be reduced to conclusive demonstrations, the work of the imagination will still be able to teach one thing which the didactic fable cannot—namely, that life is too complex to be encompassed within any comfortable formulas, either moral or economic.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

FILMS

Twenty Years After

THE series of old films which the Museum of Modern Art has been reviving this winter at the Dalton School reached one of its climaxes the other night when D. W. Griffith's "Intolerance" (1916) alternately amazed and amused an audience composed, it would seem, of people who did not know how or when to laugh—if laughter was in order at all. In my opinion it was not in order. Even when Griffith's own utter seriousness could not be accepted at its face value there was still the power of his directing hand to be felt, there was the integrity of a first-rate artist to be respected. "Intolerance" is probably bad; the public was right which rejected it twenty years ago, and Iris Barry confessed as much in her program notes. "Audiences," she said, "find it bewildering, exhausting. There is so much in it; there is too much of it; the pace increases so relentlessly; its abrupt hail of images—many of them only five frames long—cruelly hammers the sensibility; its climax is near hysteria. . . . As Pudovkin says, 'the abundance of matter forces the director to work the theme out quite generally . . . and consequently there is a strong discrepancy between the depth of the motif and the superficiality of its form.' " And of course there is the fact of Griffith's failure ever quite to justify his ambitious notion of telling four stories as one. Yet the talent displayed in the film is enormous, and on this particular night I found myself in radical disagreement with an audience which could stop to snicker at the women's hats of 1916 or at the gigantic blunders of a great director gone temporarily wrong. This was the film from which

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FILM

"INTOLERANCE"
DAVID WARK GRIFFITH'S
Epic Film
Third in series of motion picture programs assembled by Film Library of Museum of Modern Art.
SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 29, 8:45 P. M.
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almost everything "modern" in the art was learned by Russia, by Germany, and by Hollywood; its intensity, particularly toward the close, is still not easy to endure; and the acting is superb. But the audience giggled at the acting too. They thought it was overacting; whereas the violence of Mae Marsh, for example, was strictly to scale and profoundly convincing —and showed up a great deal of what we see today as the affected understatement which it is.

Having gone again to look at Charlie Chaplin's "Modern Times" I must report how greatly it improves upon acquaintance. Not that it seemed capable of improvement before; indeed I was trying a month ago to be articulate about its perfection, and failing. Nor do I expect to succeed now, since it appears to me that words are perhaps the poorest medium through which Chaplin's effects can come. I may say, however, that the picture has grown in seriousness during the interval; that it is possibly not funny at all; that the peculiar importance of its subject matter removes it from the class of those spectacles which are simply and thinly ludicrous. This is to say no more, and no less, than that Chaplin is a great comedian whose instinct keeps him always at that depth where the absurd is difficult to disentangle from the essential. The figure he presents to us—the dauntlessly eager and innocent soul adventuring among the imperfect masterpieces of man's world—is the figure both of a fool and of an angel, a little Don Quixote of our worst side streets, a fellow who lets us understand, especially when we are looking at one of his pictures for the second or third time, that the jokes are quite as much on us as on him, and that the truth about most laughing matters is transcendental. Paulette Goddard, Charlie's faithful gamin friend, has understood this too; and indeed it is as if the film itself had understood it, for it proceeds to all appearances at its own perfect and effortless pace—a pace wonderfully appropriate to the theme, and never for a second abandoned.

A good deal of cinema cant is perpetrated on the subject of "timing," and yet it is plain that Griffith and Chaplin manifest their mastery through that virtue as much as through any other. This is the moment, therefore, to speak of another picture I have been revisiting. "The 39 Steps" might very well become a model for any director who still has something to learn about the art of continuousness, or shall I say elision. The fascination of the film lies chiefly, I think, in the fact that each episode begins before the last one has left off, or at any rate grows out of it so swiftly and naturally that the joining remains invisible. I have more in mind than the now famous business of the chambermaid's open mouth becoming the mouth of a tunnel out of which the hero's train rushes with a scream like that with which she has announced the murder he will be accused of committing; I have in mind the picture as a whole, and the illusion I had that its story was literally growing before my eyes like a vine of lightning whipped out of some soil not subject to time's slow weather. This is, I admit, a fancy way of talking about a spy story which is much like other spy stories. But I can think of no soberer way in which to suggest its clear superiority, its all but absolute success in a domain where the movies will always be wise to dwell. "The 39 Steps" is the thriller which all other thrillers, I suspect, have steadily tried to be.

It is perhaps evident by now that I found the past fortnight barren of films about which there is anything to say. I enjoyed "The Country Doctor" (Music Hall), "The Song and Dance Man" (Center), and "Klondike Annie" (Paramount), in their several ways, but I cannot imagine their being discussed.

MARK VAN DOREN

Joseph Wood Krutch says:

CALL IT A DAY. Morosco Theater. Gay and delightful comedy about what almost happened to an English family on the first dangerous day of spring.

DEAD END. Belasco Theater. A play about gangsters in the making on an East River waterfront. More a good show than a great drama, but a very good show indeed.

SAINT JOAN. Martin Beck Theater. Brilliant interpretation by Katharine Cornell of what may well be Shaw's most enduring play.

END OF SUMMER. Guild Theater. The wittiest of American playwrights sets a group of interesting people to talking about the world as we find it. Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins help make a very happy evening.

ETHAN FROME. National Theater. The apparently impossible task of dramatization of Edith Wharton's novel achieved with conspicuous success. Outstanding performances by Pauline Lord, Ruth Gordon, and Raymond Massey.

LIBEL. Henry Miller Theater. Exciting English courtroom play. Surprisingly probable for this sort of thing and superbly acted.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Plymouth Theater. Amazingly successful adaptation, brilliantly staged and acted. A thoroughly delightful evening in the theater.

VICTORIA REGINA. Broadhurst Theater. Delightful series of scenes from Laurence Housman's drama stunningly acted by Helen Hayes and others. Fairer to the matron queen than Strachey but funny nevertheless and charming besides.

Mark Van Doren says:

AH, WILDERNESS. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Eugene O'Neill's touching and searching comedy of high-school days translated into a film which charms by its own right. Full of recognitions for the middle-aged.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The Marx Brothers in their best picture to date. Hilarious and brilliant.

ANNIE OAKLEY. R.K.O. A minor American masterpiece based on the life of Buffalo Bill's best-loved sharpshooter. Barbara Stanwyck as Annie Oakley divides the honors with Sitting Bull.

MODERN TIMES. Charles Chaplin. Charlie Chaplin returns to the screen disguised as his old self and fulfils every expectation. Should be seen by everyone—and heard, for he has sound effects.

THE 39 STEPS. Alexander Korda. Months old, but should be seen wherever possible. A swift and beautiful thriller set in the Highlands, and one of several films which argue British leadership in the immediate future.

THE GHOST GOES WEST. Alexander Korda. René Clair's first film in English, with scenes in Scotland and the United States. Clever, satirical, and fanciful, but without the master touch.

THE PRISONER OF SHARK ISLAND. Fox. Tells the story of Dr. Mudd, convicted in 1865 of having helped Booth to escape. Somber and powerful; does not spare the spectator.

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Letters to the Editors

"SOCIALISTS TO THE LEFT"

Dear Sirs: May I be permitted to comment on your editorial, Socialists to the Left, appearing in your issue of January 22. This editorial is as unjust to the Socialist Party of New York and to the Old Guard generally as it is inaccurate.

First, let me express my agreement with your statement that "a genuine united resistance to the growing offensive against civil liberties and living standards —despite 'recovery'—is of primary importance." But with whom are we to unite for such resistance? The Thomas-militant wing of the Socialist Party believes we ought to unite with the Communists. We, the party of New York and the Old Guard throughout the country, believe we should unite with organized labor and all progressive groups in the country. You can't have a united front with both; they are mutually exclusive. United front with the Communists, in our view, would place the Socialists in the same position of isolation and impotence as the Communists are in now. Moreover, it is hypocritical to speak of uniting to resist invasion of our civil liberties with those who by philosophy and practice are opposed to civil liberties and regard such basic rights as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly as mere bourgeois virtues.

Your statement that "the most intelligent and vigorous Socialist Party members and sympathizers must necessarily be on the left in this controversy" is a wish not justified by the facts. The intelligence of a body of people represented by the Old Guard may not be thus flippantly appraised. You yourself refer to Mayor McLevy of Bridgeport and James H. Maurer of Reading, leaders of two cities highly successful politically, who have long been regarded as intelligent and vigorous leaders of the Socialist and trade-union movement, as having denounced the Thomas wing of the party.

Your statement, "That the radical Declaration of Principles was adopted at the National Convention of 1934 by a two-thirds' vote indicates . . . that the left wing has a majority of the membership on its side," is utterly misleading. You must know that this "Declaration of Principles" was carried by a majority of only a few hundred. And since that referendum vote there has been a complete shift of sentiment to the Old Guard position. More than that, the states under militant domination have suffered such heavy losses in membership that the Old Guard has today a clear majority in the Socialist Party.

LOUIS WALDMAN

New York, March 12

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND NATURE

Dear Sirs: Thalheimer's lucid exposition of the elements of the Marxist world view fills a long-felt want for American readers, and it is indeed unfortunate that Sidney Hook, in his recent review of "Introduction to Dialectical Materialism" in *The Nation* of March 4 was so preoccupied with secondary terminological questions that he did not find space to commend the book warmly to his colleagues of the academic world who are prone to repeat strictures on dialectical materialism without first familiarizing themselves with it. I think Dr. Hook will agree with me that this short and simple work is an excellent book to do just what its title promises, that is, to serve as an introduction to dialectical materialism.

Dr. Hook writes: "Such a variety of antithetical elements enter into this philosophy that it is possible for Thalheimer to defend three mutually incompatible theories of truth at once—the Hegelian coherence theory, a crude form of the correspondence theory, and a still cruder form of the predictive theory." But are the theories of coherence, correspondence, and prediction as tests of truth necessarily incompatible?

Materialism insists on the objective existence of the outside world, independent of our judgments concerning it. If that is so, then a test of the truth of those judgments would be the degree of their correspondence with objective reality—the *correspondence* test of the truth.

If further, the objective world is not static but in a state of flux or change, subject to ascertainable laws, then, in proportion as our judgments or propositions concerning it correspond to objective reality, they will enable us to *predict* developments. Thus the predictive test is not incompatible with the correspondence test but a more complicated and rigorous form of the same test.

Finally, if the objective universe has sufficient regularity and interconnection in all its parts and aspects, so that discoveries and judgments concerning one aspect throw presumptive light on other aspects, then our propositions will *correspondingly* tend to have a certain mutual consistency. For example, a proposition which is inconsistent with the law of conservation of energy is suspect and requires further testing. Whether the further testing results in the rejection of the proposition, or its modification, or a refinement of the law of conservation of energy, it should be clear that in any event we are once more applying a special case of the correspondence test of truth.

I will not undertake to prove here the validity of this threefold correspondence test. That would be an abuse of the limits of a simple communication. Dr. Hook's whole difficulty lies in his denial, only partially formulated, of the applicability of dialectical materialism to nature, that is, the denial of the existence of an objective universe, changing according to ascertainable and hence predictable ways.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

New York, March 10

SOAP-BOXES ARE IN HOLLYWOOD

Dear Sirs: I am afraid that Morrie Ryskind's Hollywood is too close to the stars. There *are* soap-boxes in Hollywood, but Morrie, writing at a high salary for pictures and circulating among what might be called the upper bourgeoisie, if you want to get Marxian about it, doesn't know what he is talking about.

I spent three years in Hollywood. I'm going back there soon. New Yorkers talk about politics—yes. New Yorkers heckle Socialists—yes. But give me Californians for a real practical knowledge of political movements, a genuine mass development of social and class consciousness.

The New Yorker, living in a canyon of steel and concrete, feels sure of himself. No red squad will climb up the stairs of his apartment house and break down his door as he discusses politics and economics and revolution. He can drop in on hundreds of radical meetings, some in the open, some indoors, all undisturbed. He can buy his favorite radical newspaper in the subway and can get the

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latest from Moscow at any newsstand.

The Californian's soap-box is the sidewalk, the soil of the earth, the parlor floor. He hasn't time to climb up above his fellow-man. He can talk to him face to face. And if Morrie Ryskind looks closely, drops his pinochle hand, recalls that radicalism does not consist of saying, "I'm a Socialist," he will find that even in the studios the conflict is far more intense than he believes.

Perhaps, Morrie, you should get a soap-box for yourself. Climb up on it, say something, and see what happens to you. If they let you get away with it and you don't have to go to a hospital for repairs, find out where the local WPA or Unemployed League local is and pit yourself in debate against one of the poor jobless who can't get a contract in the studios.

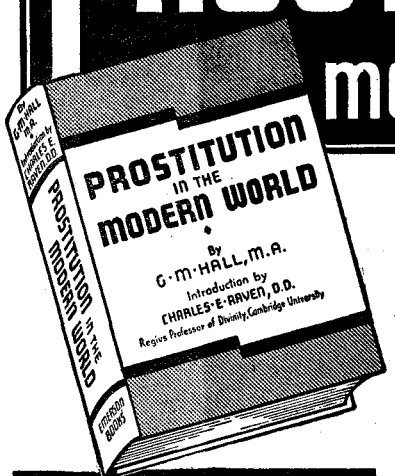
In your spare moments visit James McShann at Lincoln Heights jail. Meet the jailer, too. He's a pleasant chap who hates political prisoners with a fine patriotic hate. McShann will tell you what it means to get up on a soap-box in Hollywood and demand more and better relief.

Look him up, Morrie. And then write another piece for *The Nation.*

LEW LEVENSON

New York, March 6

PROSTITUTION IN THE MODERN WORLD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